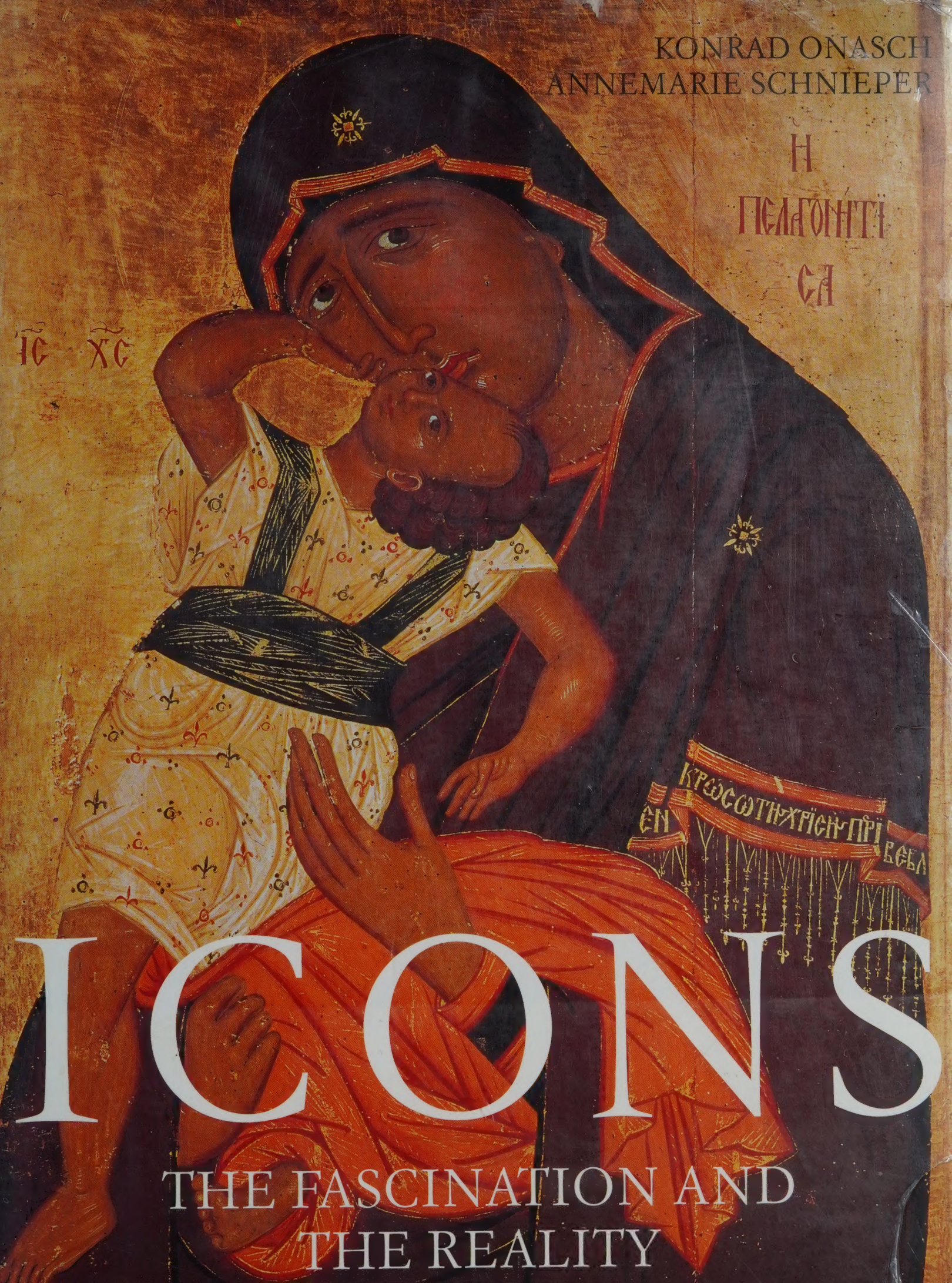
KONRAD ONASCH
ANNEMARIE SCHNIEPER



ICONS

THE FASCINATION AND THE REALITY

The reality and mystery of icons is developed here in a way that is as fascinating as it is informative. Approximately 500 illustrations show the whole spectrum of icon painting, beginning with the origins of Christian fine art and the most important historical expressions of Byzantine and Russian tradition. This book offers a broad overview of the pictorial themes and includes information about how different types of icons are produced and used.

The great masterpieces and the classical pictorial types are presented here with representative examples chosen to show the historical and geographical diversity of style, material, and use in the rich tapestry of the world of icons. Many of the illustrations were photographed specifically for this work. The reader will find here a clearly outlined and exemplary selection of the rich, vast, inexhaustible world of icons.

All illustrations in this impressive volume are placed as closely as possible to the text. The author is an internationally acclaimed expert on icons.

He has immersed himself in the presuppositions of the world in which icons were created. Icons are indeed not as other-worldly and ahistorical as they might first appear—a fact that is emphasized in this work, leading to many surprising discoveries.

Front cover: Mother of God Pelagonitissa (detail), Makarije Zographos, 1422. Art Gallery, Skopje.

Back cover: The Ascension of Christ, Palestine, ninth or tenth century.

WITHDRAWN
3 1192 01034 2713

704.9482 Onasc.K

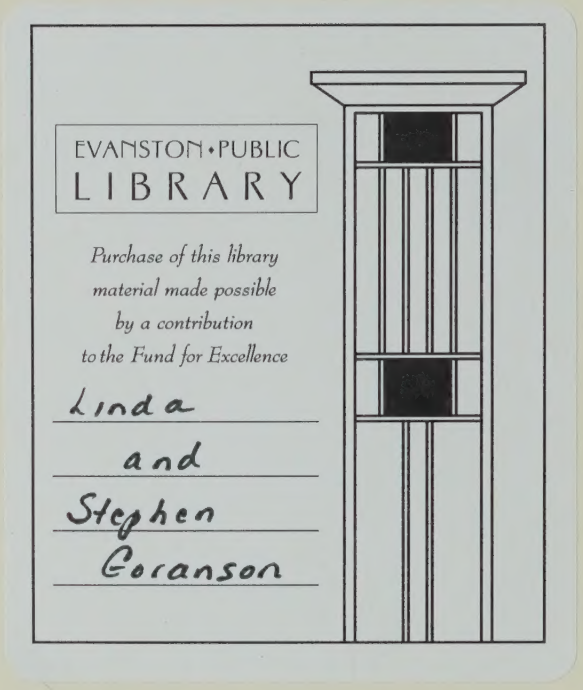
Onasch, Konrad.

Icons : the fascination and the reality / c1997.

DATE DUE

NOV 2 0 2004
MAR 2 1 2005
MAY 1 6 2008
APR 2 5 2005
DEC 1 1 2005
AUG 1 1 2006
AUG 1 1 2006
MAY 2 9 2007
NOV 2 9 2007
DEC 0 1 2007
JAN 0 2 2008
JAN 0 2 2008

DEMCO, INC. 38-2931


EVANSTON • PUBLIC
LIBRARY
Purchase of this library
material made possible
by a contribution
to the Fund for Excellence
Linda
and
Stephen
Goranson

ICONS

KONRAD ONASCH
ANNEMARIE SCHNIEPER

ICONS

THE FASCINATION AND THE REALITY

Translated by
Daniel G. Conklin

Riverside Book Company, Inc.
New York

EVANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
1703 ORRINGTON AVENUE
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

A production by EMB-Service for Publishers, Lucerne, Switzerland

© 1995 by EMB-Service for Publishers Lucerne, Switzerland

Originally published in German as IKONEN – Faszination und Wirklichkeit 1995, Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau

English translation © 1997 by Riverside Book Company, Inc., New York

ISBN 1-878351-53-2

Concept and design:
Franz Gisler

Editor:
Alan E. Mack,
German Language Services, Seattle

Typesetting:
CS Publishing, Freiburg

Photolithos:
La Cromolito, Milan

Printing and binding:
Giunti Industrie Grafiche, Florence

Printed in Italy

9 THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN FINE ART
22 SYMBOLS: ORIGIN AND MEANING

31 ICON CENTERS AND ICON SCHOOLS
35 THE BYZANTINE TRADITION
37 CONSTANTINOPLE
45 THE MACEDONIAN RENAISSANCE
49 THE PALAEOLOGUS RENAISSANCE
50 THE BALKAN PENINSULA
52 BULGARIA AND MACEDONIA
56 SERBIA
60 ROMANIA
62 MOUNT ATHOS
64 CYPRUS AND CRETE
66 THE BORDER KINGDOMS
68 THE CHRISTIAN EAST
72 THE CRUSADERS

75 THE RUSSIAN TRADITION
76 THE BEGINNINGS IN KIEV
77 VLADIMIR-SUZDAL, TVER AND YAROSLAVL
80 NOVGOROD AND PSKOV
84 FEOFAN GREK, ANDREI RUBLEV, DIONYSIUS
86 THE MOSCOW SCHOOL
90 THE WORKSHOPS OF THE TSARS AND SIMON USHAKOV
93 THE STROGANOV SCHOOL
95 SAINT PETERSBURG
96 THE MONASTIC WORKSHOPS
99 THE OLD BELIEVERS

101 PICTORIAL THEMES
103 JESUS CHRIST, THE INCARNATE WORD OF GOD
104 THE NATIVITY OF JESUS
105 THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
106 THE TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
107 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
108 THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS
109 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS
110 THE PASSION OF CHRIST
114 THE DESCENT INTO HELL AND THE RESURRECTION
115 THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN AT THE TOMB
116 NOLI ME TANGERE
117 THE FAITH OF THOMAS STRENGTHENED
118 THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

121 THE UNACCOMPANIED IMAGE OF CHRIST
122 PANTOCRATOR
124 CHRIST NOT MADE BY HANDS
126 THE SAVIOR WITH WET BEARD
127 CHRIST THE BENEFACTOR
128 CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST
129 CHRIST THE SAVIOR OF SOULS
130 THE SAVIOR WITH THE WRATHFUL EYE

133 SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF CHRIST
134 CHRIST THE IMMANUEL
135 THE ANCIENT OF DAYS
136 THE UNSLEEPING EYE
137 THE LAMB OF GOD (THE FRACTION)
138 CHRIST THE ANGEL OF GREAT COUNSEL
140 SOPHIA THE WISDOM OF GOD

142 TRINITARIAN THEMES
147 MARY: THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
148 THE NATIVITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
149 THE ENTRY OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE
150 THE ANNUNCIATION
151 THE SYNAXIS (ASSEMBLY) OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
152 THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

155 THE UNACCOMPANIED IMAGE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
156 THE MOTHER OF GOD ALONE
157 THE PARACLESIS
158 THE MOTHER OF GOD WITH THE IMMANUEL
160 THE HODEGETRIA GROUP
166 THE ELEUSA UMILENIE GROUP
172 GROUP WITH VARIATIONS
174 THE ALLEGORICAL AND SYMBOLIC GROUP

179 THE HEAVENLY HOSTS

184 THE MARTYRS AND SAINTS
184 THE SAINTS OF THE OLD COVENANT
187 THE APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS
192 BISHOPS, PRIESTS, DEACONS AND TEACHERS OF THE CHURCH
194 THE GREAT ASCETICS
198 NATIONAL AND MILITARY SAINTS
202 SAINTED PHYSICIANS AND PHARMACISTS
203 SAINTS OF FIELD AND HERD
205 THE "SUPER SAINT" NICHOLAS
207 THE PATIENT SUFFERER IN PERSON: PARASKEVA-PYATNIKA

209 SPECIAL FORMS AND USAGE
210 VITA
212 CALENDAR
214 FEAST DAYS
216 TRAVEL
218 ICONOSTASIS
226 CRUCIFORM RELIQUARY
228 DEËSIS
229 PROCESSION, PANORAMA, AND BANNERS
230 VOTIVE ICONS, EASTER EGGS, AND "TAILORED" ICONS

233 PAINTING TECHNIQUES AND ARTISTIC MATERIALS
236 PAINTERS' MANUALS
238 THE ENCAUSTIC TECHNIQUE (HOT WAX PAINTING)
239 TEMPERA AS A STANDARD TECHNIQUE
242 TEXTILES
244 TABLETKI AND REPOUSSÉ ICONS
245 IVORY AND STEATITE
246 ENAMEL
247 MARBLE
248 CERAMIC AND GLASS
251 METAL
252 SCULPTURE AND PLASTIC ART
253 WOOD-CARVED ICONS
254 SERPENTINE AND MOSAIC
256 ICON COVERINGS

261 THE PICTORIAL LANGUAGE OF ICONS
263 INTELLIGIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION
271 SPACE AND TIME
273 THE BACKDROP

275 THE ICON AS WORK OF ART
290 BIBLIOGRAPHY
293 INDEX OF ILLUSTRATIONS
295 INDEX

Page 2: Saint Paraskeva, Novgorod, sixteenth century.
The countenance of the saint reflects not only the self-confidence of the faith of "the patient sufferer in person," who became the epitome of the Christian martyr, but also the self-confidence of the independent republic and city-state Novgorod (see pages 207 and 80).

Pages 4 and 5, from left to right:
Mother of God Achtyrskaya, southern Russia, eighteenth century.
The original icon of the Mother of God with the crucifix was found in the garden of the Pokrov Church in Achtyrka in 1793. Her feast day is July 2.

Deësis with Saints, Greek, eighteenth century.
The deësis is painted on the topmost of three bands; in the middle are saints at the altar with the Lamb of God; and at the bottom are military saints and the Apostles Peter and Paul.

The Apostle Paul, Andrei Rublev, Zvenigorod, early fifteenth century.
Saint Paul is represented with small, rounded shoulders, typical of Rublev's style.

Mother of God of Vladimir, Transylvanian, around 1700.
The Vladimirskaya is a mixture of the Hodegetria and the Episkepsis types.

Page 6: Glorification of Mary, Akathist Hymn icon, Balkan master, fourteenth century.
The Mother of God sits enthroned in the middle, surrounded by the prophets who foretold her. Encircling the central image are 24 tablets visually representing the Marian hymn of Romanus the Melodist (sixth century). An acrostic hymn with verses corresponding to the letters of the Greek alphabet, this hymn of praise consists of 24 verses in addition to an introductory and concluding verse. The Hymn is called Akathistos because it is chanted standing (meaning "without sitting") and is sung on the Saturday before the fourth Sunday of Lent; it is also called "the Twenty-Four Houses of the Mother of God," in which "houses" stands for verses. The earliest representation of the Akathist Hymn is found on a fresco in the Pantanassa Church in Mistra, dated 1238–1241.

The Apostle Peter, Feofan Grek, Moscow, end of the fourteenth century.
Theophanes from Constantinople, the Greek fresco-painter, fled in 1370 to Novgorod, before whose gates the Tartar invasion was brought to a halt. It was in Novgorod that he presumably first painted icons and took up the local stylistic elements of clear silhouettes and generous brush strokes. When the domination of the Mongols ended in 1380, Moscow became stronger and attracted many artists. Feofan Grek also went to Moscow around 1395, where he was soon renowned. In the Cathedral of the Annunciation there he decorated the walls with frescoes and painted icons for the deësis row of the iconostasis where the Apostle Peter is found. The slender, elongated silhouette with the relatively small head symbolizes the spirituality of the Prince of the Apostles.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN FINE ART

The first Christians had neither the time nor the interest to develop an art that expressed their faith. They understood themselves as a community "on call," that is, they expected that the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ would occur momentarily, as the scripture states, "The one who testifies to these things says, 'Truly, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"[1] Additionally, at a time when the Church's very existence was being jeopardized by persecution, Christians had things to worry about other than expressing their faith in paintings or statues.

Another impediment to the development of a Christian art was the Old Testament prohibition against portraying spiritual realities, a prohibition taken seriously by Judaism and early Christianity alike. The first Christians profoundly detested the art of the heathen world that surrounded them day in and day out. Its works "exchanged the splendor of the imperishable God for images of perishable humans, of birds, four-legged beasts and reptiles."[2] This is a remarkable passage in view of the plethora of images found even in private homes, such as those preserved for us under the volcanic ash of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The early Christians lived in a milieu that not only loved art, but positively reveled in it. Here one must not think merely of pictorial art, but also of the literary arts in their many forms and genres. The New Testament epistles not only provide an excellent example of the importance of letter writing in late antiquity and of a polished writing style, but also witness directly to "a correspondence between earth and heaven." The prayers and hymns of the early Christian communities preserved in these letters later became the most important models for the language of Byzantine liturgical worship.

The early Christian communities, first in Palestine and even more in the entire *oikumene* (Greek for "the whole inhabited world") were confronted daily with art works of every type and quality. Statues of gods and rulers, famous philosophers and teachers, sprang up in city squares large and small. In private homes smaller areas were set aside for pictures of ancestors and of gods and philosophers particularly venerated by the family. In fact, Hellenistic art dominated the public and private life of late antiquity, somewhat in the same way that television dominates our culture today.

The more Christianity spread out from the confines of its Palestinian origins, the more it had to grapple with the various cultures found in the Roman Empire as well as with its dominant religions. The birth of Christian art, begun during a time of persecutions with sometimes lengthy periods of peace, was, therefore, a dynamic process that involved disapproval and rejection as well as incorporation and synthesis.

Not surprisingly, Christian art was first guided by the artistic forms and styles of its milieu. An especially well-known example of this is the *orans*, a figure of Hellenistic art with hands and arms raised in prayer. Another is the "shepherd," a man carrying a lamb on his arms or shoulders, an image that personified to the Greeks their ideal of *philanthropia* (the love of humankind), which for the Christians was supremely fulfilled in Christ. Thus they were able to use this Hellenistic image as a prototype of Christ the Good Shepherd.

Probably the oldest and best preserved examples of art influenced by the Christian faith stem from the field of sepulchral art, sculpture associated with

Page 8: Coptic Portrait of a Woman, sixth century, encaustic painting.
This small fragment, only 14cm x 23cm, shows the countenance of a noble woman with large expressive eyes. It is particularly valuable for our purposes in that it represents an early stage of Christian Orthodox icon painting. Necklace and earrings suggest that this is the portrait of an affluent personage. The colors of the portrait are so well preserved because they were applied with hot wax, which not only intensifies the color but also lengthens the life of the painting. It has been speculated that the light color above her head may be part of a halo and that the woman may have been a martyr. However this is not very likely since the light strip extends down into her forehead. It is probably a damaged section.

1 Revelation 22:20
2 Romans 1:23

BYZANTIUM—THE NEW ROME

The Cross of Christ appeared in a vision to Emperor Constantine as a sign of victory. In battle against Maxentius, therefore, he had the cross carried at the front of the troops. He triumphed in 312, and a year later granted Christians complete religious free-

dom. In 324, after the assassination of his co-emperor Licinius, Constantine became the sole ruler of the immense Roman Empire. To better protect his eastern provinces, he moved his residence to the Bosporus. Very soon Nova Roma, as Byzantium was at first called, sprang up there on seven hills, like Rome. The most precious works of art and the most highly venerated relics were imported to adorn its palaces, columned halls, portals and churches. The splendor that radiated from this metropolis held a mysterious fascination, as did the Eastern court ceremonial of its emperors, who were venerated as God's representatives on earth. When a large part of the city went up in flames during the Nika Riots at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Justinian (527–565), the emperor had everything rebuilt even more magnificently. And on the spot where Constantine's Church of Holy Wisdom had stood, a structure was erected of such perfect harmony and proportions that Justinian could exclaim at the consecration of this new Hagia Sophia, "Solomon, I have outdone you!"

funerals. The custom of interment in a sarcophagus, which had originated in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, was initially received with hesitation in the West, but became increasingly popular, especially after burial in the earth replaced cremation and inurnment. This development was warmly welcomed by Christians, since their faith in the bodily resurrection of the dead, for which Christ's resurrection served as pledge, forbade the earlier practice. The decoration of the sarcophagi with Christian themes opened new creative possibilities, particularly as this was the ideal place to express a fundamental assertion of the Christian faith, the resurrection of the dead. "For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain."[3]

What holds for the decorative sculpture on the sarcophagi holds also for the pictorial art in the subterranean burial sites, the catacombs. The murals in the burial chambers attest to the Christian faith in the resurrection. Decorative motifs such as vine tendrils, fruit baskets and goblets, which in pagan art refer to the blessed state of the deceased, could easily be incorporated. The portrayal of pagan gods and corresponding mythological scenes, on the other hand, is out of the question; in their stead biblical motifs were used, such as Noah's rescue from the flood, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonah in the belly of the whale, miraculous cures or scenes from the New Testament depicting meals.

Among the most important characteristics of Hellenistic painting are its lack of rigidity, the search for new, living modes of expression, and the development of an art with the truly human person at its center. Probably the most impressive example of this is the modification of the Egyptian mummy

3 I Corinthians 15:16f

Left: Emperor Anastasius, detail of an ivory diptych, around 500.
Emperor Anastasius I, who reigned from 491 to 518, is depicted on this ivory tablet in the consular attire of a judge, holding the insignia of his power.

portrait. During this age of "universal human love," the stiff masks gave way to genuine portraits, commissioned during the person's lifetime. Those pictures that have survived still surprise us today with the immediacy of their impact, the more so since the work was just a craft. Thus we have quite literally popular portraits, not only of unknown men and women of that time, but also of Roman emperors, not posed pretentiously, but with their closest family members. We are reminded of modern family photos.

These pictures were produced with heated wax paints, which, because they dried rapidly, had to be applied quickly to the surface (normally wood or canvas, but occasionally also marble or ivory). The results of this work are all the more remarkable when we realize that it was frequently done by itinerant painters. What is true of these encaustic portraits holds also for the marble statues of emperors, philosophers or unknown contemporaries: the uniqueness, the individuality (the "undividedness") of the person portrayed is always conveyed. In its way, Hellenistic art made all persons equal because its ideal was to portray people as individuals, not as examples of a "type."

At the zenith of the Hellenistic epoch, when its artistic and even its cultural and creative possibilities had already begun to wane, the previously mentioned contemporary ideal of *philanthropia* received serious competition from Christianity, and not least from Christian art. Certainly Christians understand *philanthropia* in their own way, but distance themselves from, or reject outright, an anthropocentric glorification of the human as the center of all being. For Christians, love of humankind has its roots not in the human, but in God, who in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son has revealed God's love for humanity. This conviction was bound to lead to a

Center: Empress Ariadne, section of an ivory relief, around 500.
Ariadne, the wife first of Emperor Zeno (474–491), then of Emperor Anastasius I (491–518), represents with crown, scepter and orb the consummate pomp of Byzantine-Eastern court ceremonial.

Right: Glass and gold portrait, fifth century.
This portrait shows the Byzantine sovereign Galla Placidia, who died in Ravenna in 450, with her children Valentinian III and Honoria. This small circular picture, only 6cm in diameter, was etched on gold foil, painted and then framed between panes of glass.

Page 10, left: Portrait of the imperial family, third century, encaustic.
This circular picture shows the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus (193–211) with his wife Julia Domna and their two sons. The face of the younger Geta was destroyed intentionally at a later date, after his brother Caracalla had him assassinated.

Page 10, right: Mother of God Enthroned with the Imperial Founders, mosaic in the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, around 990.
The Mother of God sits enthroned in the mosaic above the door in the south vestibule of Hagia Sophia; at either side of her are Emperor Constantine, offering her a model of his city, and Emperor Justinian, presenting her with the Hagia Sophia he built.

SARCOPHAGI

Interment in stone coffins was already being practiced in Egypt in the middle of the third millennium. The materials chosen for these burial containers were types of limestone that would accelerate the decomposition process. This explains the meaning of the Greek word sarcophagus, which literally means "flesh eater." As early as 2000 B.C. these stone coffins were being ornamented with reliefs. After Emperor Constantine officially recognized Christianity in 313, wealthy Christians also interred their family members in magnificent marble sarcophagi. At first they used traditional decorative figures giving them Christian interpretations. The Orans (embodiment of the Pieta) became the soul asking for acceptance into paradise for itself and for family members; the reading philosopher was interpreted as Peter teaching the Gospel; the Apollo-like young man with the lamb (symbol of *philanthropia*, benevolence) became Christ, the Good Shepherd. In the third century biblical scenes began to be portrayed, dealing with baptism and delivery from death. On the sarcophagi of the fourth and fifth centuries, in a setting of trees and pillars, we see Christ with his Apostles, representing the now firmly established community of the Church.

profound change in the forms and content of art. Like all changes in human history, this did not happen quickly but in stages, running parallel to the emerging political and cultural division of the *oi̯kumene*.

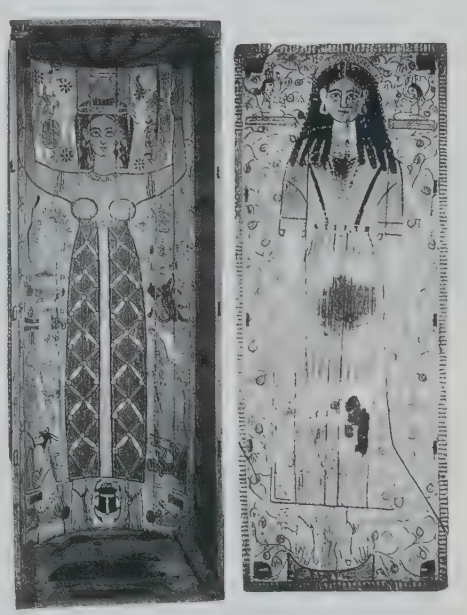
On the Bosporus lay an old Greek colony, a modestly important trading city named Byzantion. Emperor Constantine recognized the geopolitical significance of this window from Europe to the East and vice versa, and in 330 declared the city to be the imperial capital, Constantinople, the "New Rome." The founding of this namesake city sealed the slow but sure division of the Empire into West and East, into Christian Occident and Christian East, with all the negative effects that still exist. The culture of the East, or at least eastern Europe, became, over time, the nursery of what we may now call Byzantine-Slav Orthodoxy.

Between Occident and Orient there was and still is today an area of cultural transition, stretching from the Baltic Sea by way of Lithuania-Poland and the Balkan Peninsula to both shores of the Adriatic Sea, as well as to Greece and its islands. It was here that immensely important cultural exchanges took place, which led to the development of iconography. Trade was the important driving force for cultural relations among the various countries and regions of the East and the West. Two examples of the most important of these ancient trade routes were the Weichsel-Dniester Route and the famous Via Egnatia, which ran from Constantinople through Thessalonika and Ochrid to Durës on the Adriatic coast. Legend has it that it was over these and similar routes that numerous icons passed on their journeys from Constantinople to their distant final dwelling places.

During the fourth century, while the western part of the Roman Empire was being swallowed up in the chaos of the barbarian invasions, the Byzantine East managed to escape this fate through shrewd alliances with the barbarians who were passing by in the north. This was the strategic policy developed by Emperor Theodosius the Great (d. 395) whose rule was limited to the eastern part of the Empire—unlike Constantine, who was the emperor of both East

Page 12: Front of a basin-sarcophagus, third century.
The center panel shows the triple theme, often found on pagan sarcophagi: Orans, Philosopher, and Sheep-bearer (Good Shepherd). At the left Jonah rests in the pumpkin arbor after his rescue from the belly of the great fish. At the right John is baptizing Jesus, shown here as a boy. The dove, symbol of the Spirit of God, hovers over his head.

Left: Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem, partial view of the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, mid-fourth century.
This two-tiered, columned sarcophagus has five themes on each level, and served as the coffin of the prefect Junius Bassus, who died in 359. In this single scene Christ is shown in youthful Apollonian beauty as he is greeted by the people on his entry into Jerusalem. The quality of this high relief, delicately molded in Pendelikon marble, lacks nothing of the consummate elegance of ancient sculpture.



Above: Bottom and inside cover of a sarcophagus from Thebes, second century B.C.
At the right we see the deceased woman, surrounded by flowers, laid out at the bottom of the sarcophagus. At the left, on the inside of the cover, is Nut, the goddess of death, with arms raised like an orant to greet the deceased.
Left: Detail of above.

CATACOMBS

Underground burial sites were known in antiquity in Italy as well as in North Africa and in the Near East. A prerequisite for such sites was suitable ground, which could be hollowed out easily. In the volcanic limestone on the outskirts of Rome archeologists have discovered seventy catacombs, some with several tiers, which had been blocked or simply forgotten since the end of the fifth century. In the intricately branched passageways are row upon row of recessed graves. Here and there are wider corridors leading to burial chambers, where rich families laid their dead to rest in arched recesses known as arcosolia. These cubicula ("bed chambers") are brightly decorated with paintings of vines, flowers, birds, orants, shepherds and Orpheus as symbols of Christ. In the third and fourth centuries, scenes from the Old and New Testament predominate, depicting deliverance from death through Christ, the risen Lord.

and West. The result of this policy was a concentration of material and intellectual resources that also influenced art, leaving behind as it did traces of Hellenism.

However, the Byzantine style, as it is called, has its roots in the era on which Emperor Justinian (d. 565) left his decisive stamp. After the old basilica, Hagia Sophia, dedicated to the divine personification of Holy Wisdom, went up in flames during the Nika Riots in January of 532, Justinian, in an incredibly short time,[4] erected that magnificent domed structure whose boldness even today arouses admiration, and that continues to confront researchers with unanswered questions. Hagia Sophia was "an-iconic," that is, without pictorial ornamentation. In compensation, the marble appointments seen in natural

light, and even more so by the light of countless candles, must have created a kind of mysticism of light, something no longer felt in the present bleak interior.

Architecture, along with all other fields of art (wall painting, the art of book production, textile art), flourished as never before. This is evident in the churches constructed shortly before Hagia Sophia: the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (536) in Constantinople, and the richly decorated Church of San Vitale[5] in Ravenna, which was built about the same time. It is not surprising, therefore, that we encounter not only evidence of the existence of icons in the theological writings of this period, but also icons themselves. The oldest of the famous icons of the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai go back as far as the sixth century. These are portraits of holy persons done in the encaustic technique; scenic or "festal" icons did not appear until later. We do not know who painted these icons. Iconography was an anony-

4 Hagia Sophia was consecrated on December 27, 537.

5 Begun in 525, but not completed until 547.

Page 14: Arcosolium in the Catacomb of St. Domitilla, Rome, fourth century.
Here a youthful Christ sits teaching in the midst of his apostles.

Left: Mother with boy; fresco in the Cemetery of Maius, Rome, first half of the second century.
This orant with her small son probably represents a woman who died at the same time as her child. To some extent this burial painting is a preliminary step toward the later icons of the Mother of God Orans and the Mother of God Platytera.

Above left: Fish with breadbasket; fresco in the Catacomb of St. Callistus, Rome, about 220.
The fish, an Egyptian symbol of resurrection, takes on Christian meaning through the letters of the Greek (ICHTHYS meaning Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior); the allusion to the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes also gives it eucharistic significance.

Above center: Ceiling fresco in the Cubiculum Leonis in the Catacomb of St. Comodilla, Rome, about 375.
The head of Christ, encircled with a cruciferous nimbus, is shown with beard and wavy hair as in portraits of ancient philosophers.

Above right: The Raising of Lazarus, Catacomb of St. Callistus, Rome
A younger, beardless Christ with outstretched arm commands Lazarus to return to life.

Left: Ceiling painting in the Cubiculum of the Good Shepherd in the Cemetery of Maius, Rome, first half of third century.
In the center of the ceiling fresco, in a circular frame, the Good Shepherd is portrayed as a symbol of Christ. In the four rectangles at the edge are seen: at the bottom an orant, Adam and Eve on the left, Christ with Lazarus at the top, and Jonah in the pumpkin arbor on the right. This burial chamber's cheerful fresco, filled with the promise of the resurrection, is complete with flowers and fruits.

Right: Mummy portrait of a boy, Fayyum, second century.
This detail shows that the portrait of the dead boy is laid into the opening at the head end of the mummy as in a frame, and that this is held together with strips of ribbon. The large eyes in the boy's well-proportioned face seem to be looking straight through the viewer into eternity, as do the eyes of holy persons on the early icons.

Left: Egyptian mummy with portrait, Fayyum, second century.
The mummy casing is decorated with symbols of the Egyptian funeral rites; at the top end the face of an elegant young man, with a laurel wreath around his forehead, looks out at us. The pearl border of the frame and the large collar adorned with tassels indicate that the deceased was a personage of high social rank.

MUMMY PORTRAITS

To date, more than 500 mummies have been excavated at the oasis of El Fayyum in the lake country situated 120 kilometers south of Cairo. Portraits of the deceased were enclosed with the head wrappings. These are the first portrayals of individual human faces in Hellenistic-Roman-Egyptian culture. All of these mummy portraits date from between the first and the fourth century A.D., when Egypt was occupied by the Romans after the reign of Ptolemy. Along with Roman soldiers, Christians also came to Fayyum. As it was the custom there, they also had their dead mummified, but they dispensed with the realistically sculpted death masks, since the Bible explicitly forbade carved and graven images. However, they had no religious objection to painted portraits, feeling that an image painted on a flat surface was of a more spiritual nature. The portraits show the head, neck, and bust of men, women, and children, who regard us with large eyes as if from a great distance. They appear to be at home in that other world, yet their hairstyle, their jewelry, and the clothing visible in the detail at the throat appear in keeping with their earthly status. The portraits are done either on wood in encaustic (the colors were burned into heated wax) or on canvas in egg tempera (mineral pigments bonded with egg yolk). The earlier paintings were done exclusively in encaustic. From the third century on both egg tempera and a combination technique were used, which led in the fourth century to garishly bright portraits of inferior quality. In a religious edict of 392, the Emperor Theodosius forbade the mummification of the dead as a form of pagan worship.

Left: Christ and Menas, Coptic, sixth century, tempera on wood.
This 57cm x 57cm icon portrays the abbot Menas, highly revered in Bawit, as a friend of Christ; Christ lovingly puts his right arm around Menas's shoulder. The oversized heads on the elongated bodies and the huge halos that seem to rise over the hilly landscape like golden stars are typical elements of the Coptic style. To the left and behind the abbot, written once on the reddening sky and once in front of the green landscape, are the words in Coptic: Father Menas, Guardian. To the right of Christ is written the word Savior.

Above: Christ Enthroned, detail of a fresco, Coptic, seventh century.
In the middle of the apse of Chapel VI in the Monastery of St. Apollon in Bawit, Christ sits enthroned as ruler of earth and heaven. He holds the Gospel book and a scroll in his hands. Behind him is a blue circle with a luminous border. This icon originated in central Egypt, where the caliphs granted the Christian Copts complete religious freedom.

mous art until late in the Middle Ages since iconographers, like scribes and those in similar occupations, were considered mere craftsmen and did not enjoy the social status that artists have today.

Relatively small portrait icons made their way slowly but surely into the special rooms, replacing their pagan predecessors. Along with this development there arose the new problem of the deeper religious relationship between icons and those who venerated them. People of late antiquity, whether Christian or not, did not differentiate faith from superstition in any clear way. For instance, small particles might be scraped from the icons in order to mix them with the wine of the Eucharist to enhance the sacrament; in addition, icons were sometimes used as godparents at baptisms—a relatively mild form of superstition. More problematical, however, were the icons that could deliver a slap in the face or suddenly begin to speak. Even though some of these were later classified as wonder-working icons, there was an urgent need at the time for a clear theological statement, not only on the relationship between the venerator and the venerated, but on the image as such.

In Greek the word *eikon* means "image as the likeness of a prototype or model." An icon in this sense referred to every visual depiction, even the

large-scale murals on walls or domes of churches as well as the miniatures in books of biblical or liturgical texts. The chain of reasoning used by theologians defending the legitimacy of iconography is detailed and complex, but may be summed up thus: The relationship between the prototype or model and the image is one of likeness, not identity. In this sense a holy person (Christ, the Mother of God, or one or more of the saints) is present to the beholder of the icon in such a way that the beholder can pray to (or invoke) the person beheld. The veneration of the holy image by the observer, therefore, is rendered not to the matter of which the icon is composed (the wood and paint), but rather, according to the principle of likeness, to the prototype depicted, that is, to Christ, to the Mother of God, or to the saints.

The Western Church, immersed in the Roman school of objective and juridical thinking, confronted these "Greek sophistries" with decided coolness. Regarding the activities of both the image destroyers (iconoclasts) as well as the image venerators (iconodules), the opinion of the Western theologians was that the apostles wrote letters, but did not paint pictures. While they conceded, of course, that it is desirable to have paintings in churches, they nevertheless stated, "We neither destroy them as do some, nor adore them as do others." Regarding the complicated train of thought of the theologians who dealt with images, the words of the Church Father Saint Basil the Great (d. 379) should not be forgotten, "What the word transmits through the ear...painting silently shows through the image."[6] Icons are interpreted and made clear through the words of the liturgy. For this reason hymn texts from the Eastern liturgy are incorporated repeatedly into this book.

In the eighth and ninth centuries the Iconoclastic Controversy unfolded in the East. For quite some time there was widespread opposition among the hierarchy and laity to the very concept of sacred images. The Emperor Leo III (d. 741) at first defended icons against the criticism of Islam, which was fundamentally opposed to iconography. Later he allied himself with the old iconoclastic tradition, not least to mobilize its political potential against Islam, which posed a life-threatening danger to the Empire. An edict in 730 and, after the emperor's death, a council in 754 declared that "...every image, regardless of the material from which it is made or the aesthetic quality of its production..." as well as "...the godless craft of image-making" was forbidden under threat of physical punishment. Cruel violence and banishment were meant to crush the resistance, especially that of the monks. Under the Empress Irene (d. 802) the decisions of 754 were reversed, and the liturgical veneration of images was resumed. The victory was sealed in 843 with the establishment of the Feast of Orthodoxy on the First Sunday of Lent.

"O Lord who lovest mankind, the Church rejoices now in Thee, her Bridegroom and her Founder, for by Thy divine will Thou hast delivered her from the error of idolatry, and by Thy precious Blood Thou hast betrothed her to Thyself. With joy she accepts the holy restoration of the icons, and with faith she sings in praise of Thee and gives Thee glory."
Hymn at Matins for the Sunday of Orthodoxy

6 Discourse 19, *On the Forty Martyrs*, p. 31, col. 509A, in *The Meaning of Icons*, by Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, N.Y., 1982, p. 30.

Page 18: Mother of God with Saints Theodore and George, Sinai, sixth century, encaustic on wood.
This painting, most probably done in Constantinople, found its way to the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, where it escaped the destructive wave of iconoclasm. It is one of the few early Christian icons still extant. Mary is wearing a blue-purple gown and red shoes, which only Byzantine empresses were allowed to wear. An almost imperceptible movement is created by the sidelong glance of her eyes and the slight turn of her knee to the right while the figures flanking her, the bearded Theodore and the youthful George, stand stiffly upright like bodyguards, looking straight ahead. The baby Jesus is also looking straight out from the picture, as was customary in the icons of the first centuries.

The Apostle Peter, encaustic painting on wood, Sinai, seventh century.
With his characteristic keys, shown here in threefold form, and a crosier in his left hand, Peter is depicted as a gifted, elegant Prince of the Church. The three medallions at the top of the picture show Christ in the middle and Mary at the right; the identity of the young man at the left is not confirmed; it may be John, the Beloved Disciple of Jesus.

"Every image, regardless of the material used in the depraved art of the painter, should be banished from the Christian Church, removed, and declared anathema."

Statement of a Council convened by the Emperor Constantine V

Above: Miniature with iconophiles and iconoclasts, Byzantine Manuscript, 1066.
This sheet, stored in the British Library (Ms. 19352 fol. 90v), shows the supporters (iconodules) as well as the enemies (iconoclasts) of images. At bottom left, the cult of images is being debated in the presence of the emperor. At the right a bishop is whitewashing over an image of Christ with a sponge. At the above left, carrying an icon between them, are Theodore Studites and the Patriarch Nicephorus, both of whom defended the veneration of images.

Right: Emperor Leo III, Byzantine gold coin. The impression on this coin shows the head of the Emperor Leo III (717–741), during whose reign the Iconoclastic Controversy started.

ICONOCLASM

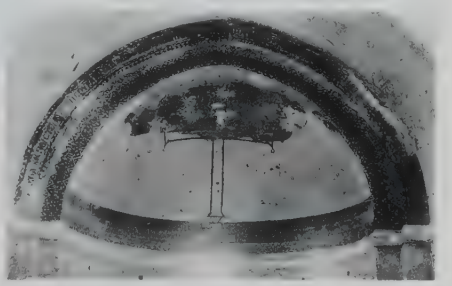
During the first two centuries Christians rejected on principle pictorial presentations of the spiritual content of their faith. However, in the long run, the desire of Christians, especially those coming from the image-oriented atmosphere of paganism, for representations of martyrs and saints could not be suppressed. The reservations of learned theologians with regard to the ever-growing cult of images made little impression on the devout populace. They understood the pictorial language of icons better than the spoken word, which one could neither kiss nor honor with incense. As the Church and the Emperor more or less tolerated this sort of popular piety, gradually it became impossible to overlook the fact that mysticism and superstition were coming together in this pious veneration of images. Some icons were considered miraculous; particles of icon paint were scraped into the chalice at the Eucharist; holy images were declared to be godparents at Baptism; the wood of icons was venerated like a relic. Caliph Yezid II was the first to issue a general prohibition of images, which was directed at his Islamic as well as his Christian subjects. The Emperor Leo III, who as military leader of an Anatolian legion had mutinied against the Emperor Theodosius III and had himself de-

clared emperor, was dependent on the good will of the Arabs. Thus for political reasons he changed from being an iconophile (supporter of icons) to being an iconoclast. In 726 Leo ordered the destruction of the large image of Christ over the Chalke Gate of the imperial palace. The people were so outraged that the emperor waited

four years before ordering the wholesale destruction of all pictorial sacred art throughout the Byzantine Empire. In Byzantium, icons were removed from churches and homes, brought together in a large square, and publicly burned. Anyone who refused ran the risk of having nose and ears cut off; some even lost their lives. The monks in particular were threatened with persecution, as most of the holy images were painted in the monasteries. The harshness with which Emperor Leo III and his successor Constantine V conducted the Iconoclastic Controversy was motivated in no small way by their desire to weaken the power of monasticism, which had become considerable. In the long run, however, the iconophiles prevailed. Greek theologian John of Damascus (d. 750) and Theodore, abbot of the Studios Monastery, defended the veneration of images on the basis, mentioned above, that it was not the image itself that is venerated, but the prototype, of which it is a reminder. They were not alone: Popes Gregory II and Gregory III declared themselves iconophiles, and excommunicated Patriarch Anastasius of Constantinople, who had succeeded the iconophile Germanus when the latter was sent into exile by the emperor. Anastasius had given his blessing to the destruction of images. The controversy was halted, at least for the time being, when the Empress Irene convened a council in Nicaea in 787. Under the Emperor Theophilus it once again flared up alarmingly. However, Theodora, who became Empress in 842, called the Council of Constantinople a year later, at which time the Iconoclastic Controversy was finally laid to rest.

Miniature showing veneration of an image, Manuscript of the Chronicle of John Scylla, thirteenth century.
The miniature shows the faithful venerating an icon of Christ hanging on a wall in the Hagia Sophia.

Below: Apse in the Hagia Eirene, Constantinople.
Mosaics of holy persons as well as icons were



destroyed during the Iconoclastic Controversy. These were replaced with symbols, as for example this cross in the apse of the Eirene Church built in 532.

Left: Empress Irene, detail of the Pala d'Oro in St. Mark's, Venice, around 1000.
At the center of the lower border of the splendid golden altar is the enamel figure of the Empress Irene, rendered in cloisonné; during her reign the Second Council of Nicea (787) took place, reintroducing the veneration of images.

In the presentations of the theme of the "Great Mother" it is not feminine beauty that is the subject. The focus is exclusively on the function of woman as giver of birth and nutrition, which guarantees the continuation of generations to come.

Left: Mother Figure with Twins, Sicily, sixth century B.C. This wide, seated mother figure, found in Syracuse, unfortunately without a head, nurses her twins; with the exception of damage on the left side, it is well preserved. Her cape, draping down to her feet and shrouding the children protectively, lends a sense of intimacy to this self-contained scene.

Middle: The Venus of Willendorf, Austrian archeological find from the Stone Age. The face of this roundish, stocky figure can hardly be seen since this idol's singular function was to express the plenitude and energy of the female sex, as symbolized by the swollen parts of the body.

Right: Mother with Child, Indian Bronze Figure from the Kond Tribe. This woman, with a bearded, animal-like head, human female body and exaggerated broad chest, holds a child on her knee, clinging to her breasts.

Over time, symbols lose their meaning and significance when they are used, as they are today, as accessories, pieces of jewelry, or amulets.[7] Originally, however, they served our ancestors as means of orientation and information in the midst of a world ruled by sinister powers, powers that controlled everything from sex life to rank in society. The world of symbols is still for us today an obscure and enigmatic world; but for the people of the past, symbols were guiding lights in the shadowy puzzle of life.

Symbols and signs are "border crossers," forms and figures at the edge of the human world, where we are surrounded and ruled, protected and threatened by other-worldly powers. Because they are an intrinsic part of both worlds, they have become the great mediators in the life of humankind. The knowledge and proper use of symbols contribute substantially to the self-image and identity of human beings. It is only in mythology that symbols descend from heaven. In reality they are creations of the human spirit, born of a relentless struggle for spiritual and physical existence. For that reason symbols deal not only with the emotions, but also with the mind. On the one hand they retain a vestige of mystery, while on the other hand they are capable of being analyzed intellectually. This age-old art of interpretation is today called hermeneutics.

One of the oldest human symbols is without doubt that of motherhood. There are statuettes made from a variety of materials that can hardly be regarded as divinities, but rather as symbols of motherhood per se. The "body symbolism" of these statuettes expresses the primary functions of a mother: conception, giving birth, protection and nurture. The best-known example of this type is the "Venus" of Willendorf.

In the course of history, as hunters turned to farming, and some became city-dwellers, their views and opinions became more highly developed, as did their habits and customs. Mother-figures previously worshipped in caves[8] were now found in temples. The nameless representative of universal motherhood was replaced by divine personifications, which gradually lost their original chthonic character, that is, their association with the earth and fertility.[9] From the anonymity of their predecessors, the great mother-goddesses of the East emerged into the bright light of universal adoration. It is interesting to note that they always had a husband or lover at their side, such as Cybele with Attis in Asia Minor, and in Egypt, Isis, with her lover-son Osiris whom she wakened from the sleep of death. Of these, the chthonic origin is seen more clearly in the Isis-Osiris relationship than with Cybele and Attis.

Temple prostitution and wild sexual excesses, however, were not the essential factor of the Eastern mother-cults; rather, the triadic typology of Mother/Father-Lover/Son proclaims the *family* as the place of nurture and care, with sexuality standing at its service. The veneration of the mother-goddesses also had matrimonial aspects as well, which were integral to a comprehensive understanding of the universe, the earth, and humankind, and which we can study in the myth of Isis and Osiris.

The story and its interpretation may be summarized briefly as follows: Mourning, Isis goes in search of the corpse of Osiris, who has been murdered and dismembered by Set. She finds him and brings him back to life for a short time in order to conceive the boy Horus, whom she raises in a wooded swamp. In due course, Horus incarnates himself permanently in the dead Pharaoh, "because the son fills the father's place." The death and resurrection of Osiris are reflected in the rhythmic ebb and flow of the waters of the Nile with their floods. In Egypt, rituals of consecration of water

7 From the Latin *amoliri*, "to turn aside, to ward off, to heal."

8 We think of the Grotto of the Nativity, the cave that is the traditional site of Christ's birth.

9 Perhaps this trait survived in the numerous oriental cults that practiced temple prostitution.

were performed by pagan and Christian alike. These were performed on December 25 and on the night between January 5 and 6, the dates of the Christian Feast of Lights and the Epiphany ("Theophany," see page 107). The pagan priests countered by instituting the Feast of the *Kore* ("virgin") and the birth of *Aion* ("universal time, eternity"). Evidently the transition from pagan religious notions to Christian ones was by no means always unopposed.

To give another example: in one of the apocryphal gospels it is reported that the hand of one of the two midwives fell off because she did not believe in the Virgin birth of Jesus. We can grasp the controversial nature of this story when we remember that Astarte-Cybele was the patroness of midwives in this part of the world. On the other hand, amulets and statuettes depicting Isis with the boy Horus inspired Christian artists to portray the Mother of God with the child Jesus. Christian painters were likewise familiar with the image of Isis nursing the child Horus. However, the model that they created for the icon The Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring, which later became a commonplace of iconography, adopts only the general motif of praise of the Mother of Jesus[10] (see also page 173).

The cave theme also plays a significant role in the iconography of the birth of Jesus and in the Christmas hymns (see page 104). The story of a radiant light filling the cave at the birth is a theme that also occurs in the accounts of the birth of Buddha. In the Hellenistic era, the time of the great cultural exchange between Orient and Occident, the author of the apocryphal gospel would have known this. Similarly, in a mountain cave on Crete, Rhea bears Zeus and hides there to rear him. Even more substantive is a commentary that the Church Father Jerome (d. 420) handed down, "Bethlehem, which now is ours, and is the most sublime place on earth, was shaded by a grove consecrated to Tammuz, that is, Adonis; and in the cave where Christ once cried as a baby, Venus lamented her lover." The Venus-Adonis myth is a variant of the Isis-Osiris myth. Venus (Greek Aphrodite) falls in love with the handsome young Adonis, who is killed and torn apart by a boar. Venus obtains permission from the goddess of the underworld for Adonis to stay on earth for six months every year.

The Mother of God of Galaktotrophusa, Russian, sixteenth century.
The idea of the "milk-giving" Mother of God (Greek *galaktotrophusa*) has roots in Egyptian and Greek depictions of nursing mothers, as for example Isis with the boy Horus, and even older Mother and child idols from the Stone Age. The Christian image of Mary with the child Jesus at her breast shows the maternal love of the Mother of God, her love for the Logos made flesh through her, and has nothing in common with ideas behind the "Great Mother" goddesses, who represent the natural force of giving birth.

As does almost no other text of the early Church, this citation by Jerome puts us directly "on site" in the confrontation and struggle between Christianity and the pagan world, which, as we have indicated, by no means always proceeded peacefully. However, in any case it may be said that those of the Classical and late-Classical world were predisposed, in many ways unknown to us, to hear the revelation of the ever-virginal Mother of God.

We turn now to a mythic figure belonging totally to the human world: Mithras. He too was born in a mountain cave, and was worshipped in underground caves, rather than in temples. Initially invoked by the lower classes, slaves, and soldiers, Mithras was

10 Based on Luke 11:27, "Blessed are the breasts that nursed you."

Since time immemorial the sun has been revered as a divine source of energy, without whose life and warmth-giving rays all life on earth, plants, animals and humankind, would perish.

Above, from left to right: Head of a god with wreath of sun rays, detail of a stone sculpture from north Iran.

Surrounded by the astrological signs we see in the cosmic world-egg Mithras, the Iranian god of light and fertility. This piece is a Persian variation.

Sun-God of the Mithras cult, Roman stone relief of the third or fourth century.

Turkish relief from Asia Minor with a youthful god riding off on a sun chariot, behind whose head a huge sun gloriole radiates.

Right: Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, as helmsman of the sun chariot, mosaic in the mausoleum of the Julians, Vatican Necropole, around 300.

later declared to be the *sol invictus*, "the Invincible Sun," who celebrated his victory over darkness on December 25. However, he did not continue to function simply as a guide to the winter solstice. Around the beginning of the Christian era, Mithras became a kind of "designer deity," and his cult, a mystery religion with strong appeal to the military, made its way into the highest circles of society. Ultimately, the Romans identified their deceased emperors with Mithras by proclaiming that after death they ascended to the *sol invictus* in a chariot. The following facts may clarify the sometimes very complicated connections between Christianity and the pagan world: In 354 the Roman imperial calendar designated December 25 as the *natalis invicti solis*, the Birthday of the Invincible Sun. A calendar of saints, presumably added to the official calendar by a Christian, notes for December 25, "Christ born in Bethlehem of Judah." It was at this time that Christians replaced the pagan *sol invictus*, that is, the deceased emperor exalted and worshipped as god of the sun, with Christ, their own "Sun of Righteousness."[11] A burial mosaic has been found that shows just such a figure—behind whose head a cross appears instead of the nimbus signifying a ruler—probably the silent testimony of a deceased Christian.

To conclude the group of examples, which could be expanded considerably: Emperor Constantine had large amounts of earth moved at the site of the Vatican in Rome in order to erect a basilica over the grave of Saint Peter. In the process, shrines of Astarte-Cybele and Mithras were filled in. Excavations under Saint Peter's Basilica have revealed an altar on which bulls were sacrificed. Its inscription testifies that it was consecrated on July 19, 374, to the "Great Mother Cybele" as well as to "the supremely invincible Mithras." After literally burying the past and its ancient gods under tons of earth, the emperor built, on the Vatican Hill thus created, the colossal Basilica of Saint Peter, Apostle to the Nations.

In addition to the powerful figures of the ancient deities, which so intrigued humankind, images of a more symbolic character have been passed on to us, which refer to specific religious concepts. First and foremost in this category is the cross. The history of the cross as a symbol can be divided into two periods: its meaning before and after the death of Jesus on a cross at Golgotha. Although commonly found in many forms in the ancient East, as well as in prehistoric America, the cross as a reference to the most terrible form of execution was not known in pre-Christian times until the Persians began the practice of crucifixion. The cross was used as a hand signal, but was also put on pictures and amulets as a defense against enemy magic or any kind of harm. It was also known in Judaism in this

Death by crucifixion was considered the most shameful punishment in the antique world. The fact that Christ took upon himself this sacrificial death for the redemption of humankind lets Christians celebrate the "cross as a sign of victory," through which their Lord overcame death and awakened the paschal joy of the resurrection.

Above, from left to right:
Youthful, beardless head of Christ with a cross nimbus embellished with precious gems, mosaic in the Cappella Arcivescovile, Ravenna, fourth to fifth century.

Cross Mosaic, Funerary Chapel of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, sixth century. In this small church entirely decorated with mosaics, the cross shines in the midst of the night sky studded with stars, as pledge of redemption and resurrection.

Cross with the monogram of Christ, which appeared to Emperor Constantine the Great in a dream. At the time still not baptized, he had this sign put on the shields of the soldiers, who subsequently defeated Maxentius in 312.

Nubian Cross Fresco, beginning of the eleventh century. In the corners of the arms of the cross we see the attributes of the Evangelists, who give prominence to the image of Christ in the middle. This five-part scene is surrounded by a concave square of chains hung with bells, the corners of which reach the rhomboid frame of chains which encompasses the whole cross.

11 Malachi 4:2.

Right: Three-headed god as embellishment on a terra-cotta vase from Bavay, France, second century. The three heads united with each other in a row represent a triadic Gallo-Roman god. Wide eyes stare at us from behind beautifully sweeping eyebrows. The wreath of hair around the three heads and their well-groomed beards are decorated with ornamental curls.

Above: Snake King, Bronze, Cambodia, Khmer art. The three heads of the hooded cobra Naga are joined together to form the head of the Snake-King, revered in Asia as protector of gods and as protector of Buddha.

context. In the Prophet Ezekiel we read, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed therein."[12] Soldiers who were followers of Mithras demonstrated their allegiance with a cross tattoo on their bodies. Christian baptism was able to tie into this fondness for symbols—into the function, not the inner meaning. The ancient Egyptian "loop of life," also called an *ankh*, was understood by the Copts as a reference to Christ's overcoming death and was venerated as such, a meaning unknown to the Egyptians.

The swastika, on the other hand, with its right-angled or curved endbeams, has achieved a certain measure of infamy. The swastika, or "eternal cycle" in its native India, symbolized the eternal cycle of nature and of birth. A swastika with hooks bent to the right symbolizes the rising sun and, therefore, life itself; with hooks bent to the left it represents the setting sun, night, and death. Thus swastikas, as symbols, originated as signs of natural processes, not of a political ideology. The swastika was present in pre-Columbian America, in China, and in Tibet, as well as in Europe from a very early time; it rarely appeared in Africa, however.

While it is doubtful whether the *gammadium*,[13] a symbol frequently seen on ancient ceremonial robes, is derived from the cross, the cosmic meaning of this symbol prior to Christianity is beyond dispute. Its four ends refer to the four geographical directions and the four ways of knowledge; its midpoint refers to the spiritual point of departure, the center of meaning out of which all understanding and knowledge proceed. In the same way the many paths of religious understanding of our forebears also demonstrate departure, "alienation" from the center of life's meaning, and at the same time returning, or rather coming home.

12 Ezekiel 9:4.

13 A Latin word, meaning "shaped like the Greek letter *gamma*."

In conclusion, we turn to the cross on which Jesus was executed, which has hardly any similarity to the types of crosses we have discussed thus far. In the Greek and Latin versions of the New Testament the words for cross are *stauros* and *lignum* respectively. Both words refer to a post on which the person sentenced to death hung, bound, until dead. It was also possible to affix a horizontal beam on this post, to which the hands could be bound or nailed.

signs served to open up the mysteries of nature and the supernatural world and consequently offered the possibility of controlling them.

One stands for the Uncreated, for the unity that contains all diversity, for the divine as such.

Two is the number representing an all-encompassing cosmic duality: heaven and earth, day and night, man and woman, God and humanity—in general the inherent polarity found in the structure of the world.

Even in prehistoric times people imagined the essence of the gods polymorphically; that is, the gods were often represented with three faces, symbolizing the life of nature, which is governed by a triadic rhythm of blossoming, bearing fruit, and dying. Needless to say, this is not the same as the Christian belief in one God in three persons, the doctrine of the Trinity, which is based on completely different presuppositions.

Left: Triad of Osiris, Horus and Isis, Egyptian, 22nd dynasty (ninth to seventh centuries B.C.)
Osiris and Isis with the boy Horus between them represent not only a familiar element of Egyptian culture, but, above all, the continuous transformation of life, death, and resurrection, as it occurs in Egyptian mythology.

Middle: Container depicting the corn-goddess, Mochica culture, Peru.
The Indians deified corn as their essential food. The goddess of corn is shown with her two children in the form of a corn cob; her robe is formed from rows of kernels.

Right: A four-headed Brahma, sandstone sculpture, Cambodia, tenth century.
The archetypal image of Brahma in the Khmer culture is shown with four heads, representing the cosmic creator-figure and universal principle.

In most cases there was also a short board for the feet. This foot board, set at an angle, is an essential part of the three-barred Orthodox cross. To Christians, the cross became "the wood of life."[14] By virtue of Christ's universally redemptive act on the Cross, it also took on its earlier universal meaning, extending to the four directions of the compass, unburdened by association with its function as an instrument of execution. These are all points of departure for concepts that were central to the iconographic representation of the crucified Christ (compare page 113): In iconography, the cross is a *tropaion*, a trophy, a sign of victory, whose message reaches to the ends of the earth.

From the beginning of recorded time, numbers have played a dominant role in humankind's understanding of the world—not just numbers themselves, but numbers as secret signs and ciphers or codes. The deciphering of these number

Three has its deepest meaning in dispelling the danger that this polarity might become an ideological dualism, which, if unresolved, can lead to hopeless pessimism. The trio of man-woman-child redeems the isolation of the duo of man and woman. The symbolic figures of the "holy family" may be understood in this sense: Osiris, Isis, and Horus in Egypt; Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva in India; Anu (heaven), Enlil (air), and Ea (earth) in Babylon. Examples of these triadic configurations or signs are practically inexhaustible, ranging from faith, hope, and love to the three continents Europe, Asia, and Africa, to the philosophical triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis (principles already recognized in antiquity). Christian thinkers took over this schematic concept of threeness as the sign of absolute perfection, infusing it with the master principle of the life-giving Trinity, which was eventually reflected in icons.

14 Revelation 22:2, see Acts 5:30; Galatians 3:13.

More or less consciously, magic numbers play an important role in the religious and secular life of practically all cultures; this in turn affects psychological behavior.

The Holy Trinity, Moscow, eighteenth century. This icon of the Hospitality#1 of Abraham depicts neither Abraham nor his wife Sarah, but only the three angels sitting around the table, symbolizing the Holy Trinity. Their silver halos and collars are ornamented with multicolored enamel, as is the wide frame.

From earliest times the triangle, called delta (Δ) by the Pythagoreans, has been used to represent all of these concepts. The range of concepts represented by the triangle extends from the heights of human thought just discussed to the embodiment of female sexuality and, therefore, of human fertility and the fecundity of the fields. The triangle as a symbol of the female genitalia played a part in the jurisprudence of many ancient societies. The infamous Russian "mother curse", for example, was used in the legal proceedings of the heathen Slavs as an oath as well as a curse whose power was aimed at perjurers. In summary we can say that the number three, as a symbol of the overcoming of all one and two-dimensional world views, has had a strong attraction for philosophical and theological systems since the earliest times.

Four, again, is a typical cosmic symbol: the four winds, the four seasons, the four world empires, four ends of the cross; but it is also the sign of completeness: the four gospels; a sign of self-containment: the "quarters" of a city; the four holy letters of the Hebrew name for God, YHWH *(Yahweh)*, a sign of highest sanctity. The visual symbol of four is a square, whose sides of equal length symbolized the concept of justice to the Church Fathers.

Five is the number of planets known to the ancients, the five wise and five foolish virgins, the five senses, but also the five wounds of Christ. Five finds focus as a magic sign in the pentagram which was regarded as a defense against evil magic.

Six has a plethora of meanings: the six days of creation, the six work days, the six jugs of wine at the wedding at Cana. As a magic symbol, six is the hexagram, or Star of David, formed by two triangles representing as it does the union of heaven and earth, or of fire and water in alchemy.

Seven in Babylonian and Jewish thought symbolizes the wholeness and perfection of the cosmos, as in the number of the planets plus the sun and the moon, and the day on which God rested from the work of creation. There are seven sacraments in the Latin Church, seven petitions of the Lord's prayer, seven virtues, but also seven deadly sins. (It should also be noted in passing that the number seven as a religious symbol plays an important role in Islam as well as in Buddhism.)

Eight is the one number that in almost all world religions has a positive symbolic character: the eight beatitudes of Christ and the eightfold path of virtue of the Buddha, the eight tones of Church music and the division of the church year into eight units, as well as the eight spokes of the compass. In Christianity there is also the octagonal ground plan of baptisteries, related conceptually to the eighth day of the week, on which Christ rose from the dead.

Nine, as the sum of three times three, is for many peoples the number of perfection: the nine choirs of angels, the nine levels of the Chinese pagoda.

Humans have ten fingers, God gave ten commandments. Ten is the number of moderation, whereas eleven symbolizes excess. The division of the month into "decades" and the ten plagues visited upon the Egyptians should be mentioned, as well as the ten horns of the dragon described in the Apocalypse.

It is twelve that ultimately possesses transcendent symbolism: The twelve months of earthly time are connected with the twelve astrological signs of the zodiac. Twelve is created by the multiplication of the holy number of three with four, which in turn symbolizes the spreading of the message of the triune God. The twelve disciples of Christ must be seen in this context. Incidentally, the twelve tablets on which the laws of ancient Rome were engraved were the foundation stone of Roman jurisprudence.

Finally, thirteen has been the number of absolute negativity, from the time of ancient Babylon up to the present day.

While the symbols of the pagan world gradually gave way to Christian interpretations, the magical meaning of numbers survived for a long time, in fact to the present day. In the West, the Church Father Augustine (d. 430) understood the role that numbers played in human affairs; therefore he subjected them to a comprehensive systematization from a Christian perspective, much of which has been touched upon in the preceding overview.

Left: Pentecost, miniature, title page of the Pentecost sermon in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in the Panteleimonos Codex, sixth to eleventh centuries.
Six apostles sit facing each other around a high, narrow arch. At the upper left we see Peter; on the right, Paul, with a receding hairline. The apostles are bathed in the light of the Holy Spirit. The two figures in strange clothing standing in the darkness of the arch symbolize the heathen peoples, who experience at first hand the linguistic miracle of Pentecost that unites humanity.

Above: The Holy Trinity, dome fresco in the vestibule of the trapeza dining room of the Monastery of Dochiariou on Mount Athos, sixteenth century.
In a circle of sky filled with angels, Christ sits enthroned at the right hand of God the Father. Both have one hand on the globe hovering between them, above which the dove of the Holy Spirit is visible in a hexagonal aureole. At the bottom edge of the circle is the footstool of the enthroned divine Persons, made up of many-eyed winged wheels of fire (the rank of angels called "thrones").

Left: Detail of above.

ICON CENTERS AND ICON SCHOOLS

Apart from the special role of icons as spiritual, ritual, and artistic objects, they may be regarded as cultural artifacts, albeit of unique character. Arnold Hauser said that the "products of a culture are social products, vehicles of the self-projection of a given society and the mutual understanding of its members; for that very reason they can be compared with each other since they are the products of identical cultural presuppositions." This definition fits icons with amazing accuracy. We may speak, for instance, of their "communicative efficacy," of the ease with which icons communicated the messages encoded on them in shape and color. The sacred images, whether at home or at church, were, in fact, so familiar as to be treated like members of the family.

With this in mind we arrive at the foundation of this deeply religious art, at the place where it is created, in painters' workshops. From time immemorial, icon painters were not just organized into cooperatives; they formed schools, which were very important and wielded influence beyond their own local and regional borders. It was not only material factors that contributed to their formation and consolidation, but also the spiritual and intellectual environment that we generally call their cultural milieu. Moreover, these icon workshops and schools were the only place where the artist as icon painter could come to grips with the intellectual guidelines of his Church. Lastly, the great variety of these schools demonstrates that to conceive of the Eastern Church in the abstract as a monolithic culture would not do justice to the living diversity of Orthodox faith and life.

After the division of the Roman Empire into a western and an eastern half in 398, churches with territorial jurisdictions, or patriarchates, arose within the eastern Empire, in Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem; and, of course, Constantinople, as the New Rome, soon rose to a position of pre-eminence. Together with Rome in the West, these patriarchates made up the "pentarchy" of the early Church. Outside the borders of the old Empire, the Patriarchate of Armenia (whose Catholicos was the Archbishop of Echmiadzin) and that of Georgia (whose see was at Mtschet) had already been established by the fifth century.

The evangelization of Slavic peoples and the establishment of autonomous ecclesiastical structures led, over the course of centuries, to the formation of additional patriarchates, which can be briefly summarized as follows. In Bulgaria, a first patriarchate existed from 927 to 1018, whose see was established at Preslav and later moved to Ochrid; a second patriarchate, whose see was at Trnovo, lasted from 1235 until the Turkish conquest in 1393; the third, whose see is at Sofia, has been in existence since 1951. For a long time, Serbia was politically and ecclesiastically dependent on the Bulgarian see of Ochrid; however, an autocephalous[1] national church was established in 1219, first as a metropolitanate, and in 1346 as a patriarchate with a primatial see at Pec. It was dissolved in 1459 after the Turkish conquest of Serbia, but was reestablished in 1557. In 1766 the Patriarchate of Pec was again dissolved; immigrant Serbs established a metropolitanate in southern Hungary at Karlovy Vary, which was elevated to a patriarchate in 1848. Romania first had contact with Christianity in its Latin form; however, in the ninth century, it adopted the Byzantine-Slav rite of its Bulgarian rulers. There was probably no early subordination to the jurisdiction of Ochrid, though a

Page 30: Fragment of a deësis group from Zvenigorod, Andrei Rublev (?), early fifteenth century.
Although the top part of the head is missing, the face of Christ, painted in delicate, shaded brown hues with deep-set eyes, and with a gentle gaze radiating tranquillity and unsentimental kindness, is of such tender sensitivity that this portrayal is attributed to Andrei Rublev, the most lyrical of all Russian icon painters.

1 That is, a church "with its own head." Editor's Note: a church that can select its own bishops without having to have the approval of another ecclesiastical authority.

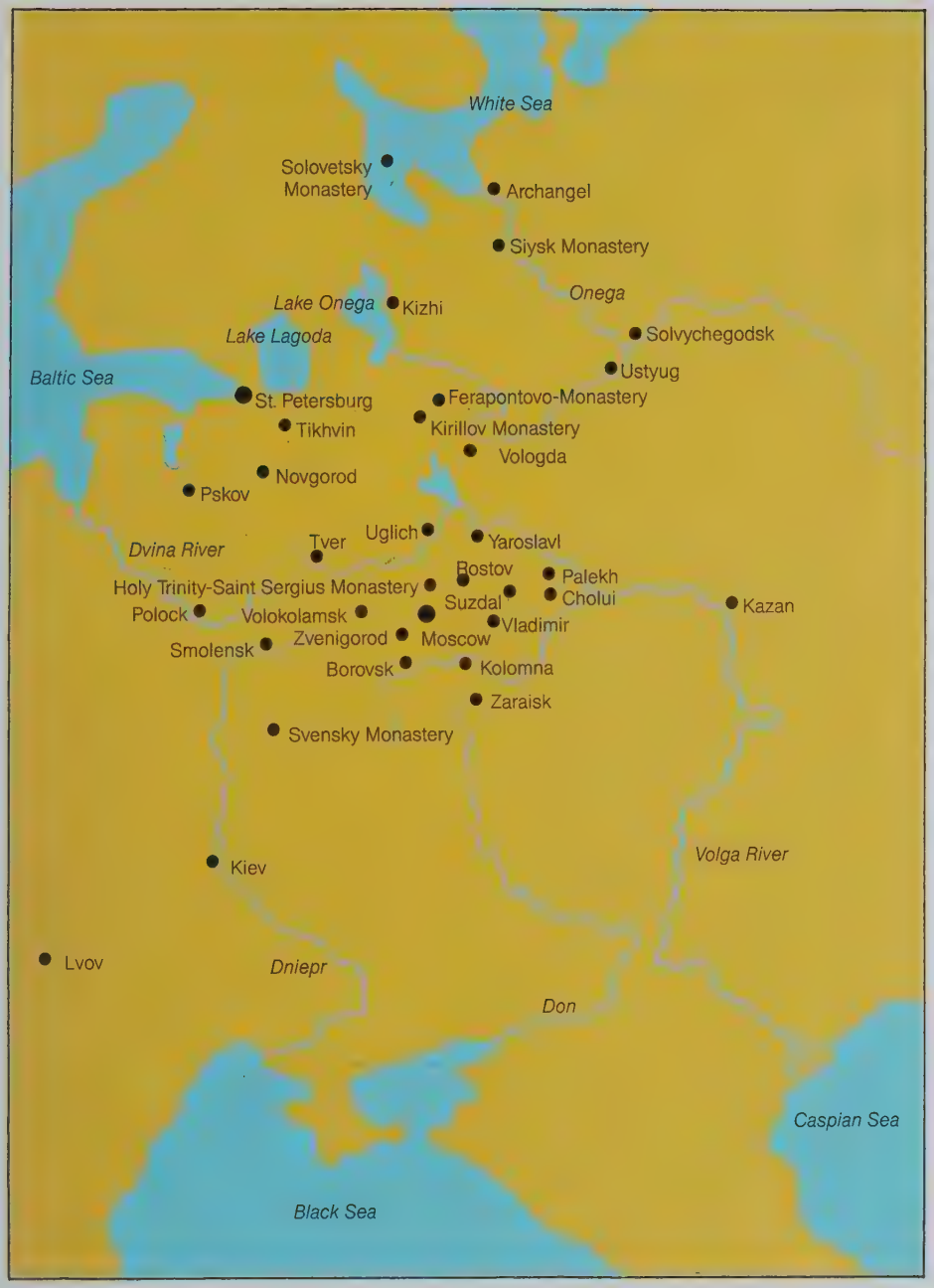
cultural connection is quite possible. In 1865 the Romanian Church declared itself autocephalous, and a Patriarchate was established in 1925 with its primatial see at Bucharest.

After the adoption of Byzantine Christianity in Kiev around 980, a metropolitanate was established in Russia under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The rise of Moscow and the close ties of the Metropolitans of Kiev with the Grand Dukes of Moscow led progressively to a tacit autocephaly. Moscow became the seat of the metropolitanate after 1325, and the Byzantine Greek Metropolitans were replaced by Russians. In 1448 the Russian Church became autocephalous with its primatial see at Moscow, which, after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, regarded itself as the successor

This map shows the cultural sphere of the Roman Empire. The famous and legendary Via Egnatia, connecting Constantinople with Durrës on the Adriatic coast, is marked for special attention. On this road are to be found the cultural centers of Thessalonika and Ochrid, which were also important in icon painting. Thus the Via Egnatia is one of the transit routes along which famous icons of Constantinople found their way to the places designated for their veneration. Initially the impetus emanated from, and was subordinate to, the center of the Byzantine Empire; however, in the course of time independent icon schools arose, forming several spheres of influence: the holy Mount Athos with its monasteries, the Peloponnese, the island of Crete, and, lastly, Venice, the great if not always obedient daughter of Constantinople. An example is the Italo-Byzantine art style that developed in central and southern Italy, which was in Byzantine hands until the Middle Ages. At these farthest borders of the Byzantine Empire, trends developed in icon painting that at the beginning of the Middle Ages led to quite an interesting symbiosis of traditional and progressive views of this ancient religious art. If Skopje was for a time a bone of contention between Serbia and Bulgaria, the monasteries of Gračanica, Studenica, Sopoćani and Nerezi were centers of spirituality in Serbia.

of the Byzantine Empire, the "Third Rome." Indeed, the Patriarchate of Moscow and All Russia was formally established in 1589. The patriarchate was dissolved by Peter the Great in 1721, and replaced by a committee called the Most Holy Ruling Synod, but was reestablished in 1918.

This brief synopsis shows clearly that we can speak neither of *the* Eastern Church nor of *the* Orthodox Church. In contrast to the Catholic Church of the West, with its centralized papacy in Rome, the Eastern Church is composed of independent Churches, some headed by a patriarch, and others by a "metropolitan" or "archbishop." In addition to autonomy in jurisdiction and administration, every Church enjoys unlimited cultural sovereignty, expressed above all in icon painting, as well as in church architecture. What is true of the greater church jurisdictions is also true for the dioceses within them. To mention only two of many historical examples, one can distinguish the icons of Constantinople from the icons of Thessalonika and those of Moscow from those of Novgorod. Although these centers of icon painting



This map of Russia gives us a feeling for the vast dimensions of this land, which stretches from the White Sea in the north to the Black and Caspian Seas in the south, not to mention Siberia to the east, which does not appear on this map. The following cultural centers may be distinguished:

1. *Kiev*, "the mother of Russian cities," which was devastated by Mongols in the thirteenth century but experienced a renaissance during the Baroque era.
2. *Vladimir-Suzdal*, with Bogolyubovsk and Yuriev Polsky.
3. In its turn, the Grand Duchy of *Moscow*, which in the course of time subjugated the other principalities of northern Russia.
4. *Novgorod* with its "younger brother" Pskov and its vast and ancient colonial territory stretching to the North Sea. In this area a rich tradition of icon painting developed, which included stately as well as peasant styles. Museums at Kizhi, Solvychegodsk, Ustyug, Archangel, Vologda, and other northern sites contain abundant examples of this iconographic art.
5. In the *monasteries and cities surrounding Moscow*, traditions developed that were further cultivated by orthodox believers in the workshops of Mstera, Palekh, and Cholui. The famous monasteries surrounding Moscow, the "Third Rome," such as Volokolamsk, Borovsk, and, in particular, the piety of the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Monastery, had their own impact on the content and form of iconography.
6. The area of *Poland-Lithuania* was incorporated into the Russian Empire during the seventeenth century. The introduction of Catholicism and the creation of a Greek Catholic Rite united with Rome created a complex cultural situation as well. As so often happens, however, it provided the stimulus for an independent art, perennially attractive to researchers as well as collectors. Galician and Carpatho-Russian icons manifesting unmistakably indigenous characteristics can be found in the museums of southern Poland. Lvov (in Ukrainian, *Lviv*) was the cultural focus of this unique meeting and mingling of religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) and denominations (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Protestant). The cultural traditions of this city, situated on the major trade route of middle Europe that ran from Krakow to Central Asia, extend back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

and these schools of iconography could not exist without this particular form of ecclesiastical organization, neither are they slavishly bound by it either.

In conclusion, we see the genesis of a cultural milieu. The schools of painting of this milieu in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia, what might be termed Byzantine-Slav Orthodoxy, gave new impetus to the Byzantine traditions. Thus the empire of icons extended from the deserts of North Africa to the coasts of the Arctic Ocean, and from the Adriatic to the Pacific.

We should not overlook the fact that there was also a kind of encounter and dialogue between Orthodox iconography and the devotional pictures of the West, and not merely in the painting schools of Crete, Cyprus, and the other Greek islands. This is related to the complicated history of unions between the Roman Church and various Orthodox churches, especially in Ukraine. But traditional forms of Orthodox religious expression, including icons, remained intact; in other words, a kind of *modus vivendi* developed that allowed for the cultural sovereignty of both Churches.

What is the reality behind the fascination of Byzantium? Indeed, what *is* Byzantium? Is it here on the eastern frontier of Western civilization that all wisdom is to be found, like buried treasure, a paradise once lost? Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790–1861), a discriminating but enthusiastic admirer of Byzantium, gave the following answer: Byzantium, he said, "...is a world in itself, an Atlantis of blissful rapture, a storehouse of earthly delights and a seat of contradictions. Bustling and solitary, of the land and of the water, it is a great world-amphibian redolent of fragrance, of light and shadows, of long caravans. It is filled with the music created by surging waves, crowding gondolas and dolphins passing by. It is the gigantic fortress of an ancient continent cut off from foreign lands to the east and west by deserts; to the south and north by turbulent straits. Whoever rules here with might controls the world." So much for the fascination; what about the reality?

First of all, there were never really either a Byzantine Empire or, for that matter, Byzantines. These are the technical terms of a discipline calling itself Byzantine Studies. The Byzantines called themselves "Romans," *Romaioi.* They felt, thought, and acted like Romans with a Greek education. The origin and past of the city of Byzantium are shrouded in the mythical shadows of prehistory. It is likely that Thracians founded the city on the spit of land between the Sea of Marmara, the Bosporus, and the Golden Horn, and the name Byzantium probably refers to a legendary Thracian hero with a like-sounding name. Gradually the Thracian population was infiltrated by Greeks, under whom Byzantium began to develop into an important trade city, with trade routes going out across the Black Sea and to Asia Minor.

From the middle of the second century A.D., Byzantium was numbered among the cities and provinces allied with Rome. The numerous Greek colonies lining the shores of the Black Sea did more than just trade with the neighboring barbarian peoples, such as the Scythians; they also served as sentinels against imminent barbarian attacks on Byzantium. This threat to its existence was a constant challenge for Byzantine politics and culture, and left an enduring mark on both.

After the Emperor Constantine's victory over Licinius in 324 and the establishment of Constantinople, the ancient city became the capital and center of the Christian oikumene, at first even for the West. Constantly threatened internally by unpredictable insurrections, the Roman Empire did not have a constitutional hereditary monarchy. As Hans-Georg Beck puts it, the political life of Constantinople and the governing style of its rulers, marked as they were by games of intrigue, the unfathomable politics of the Circus parties, poisonings, and lifelong banishment (most often to monasteries) "watered down the sovereignty" of its emperors. In addition to this there was the constant threat of barbarian tribes storming across the Balkan Peninsula from the Asian steppe.

In the end, however, when fate finally overtook the city, it was plundered by crusaders from western Europe who carried off icons as part of their loot, one of which was an imperial treasure, the icon of Christ Not Made by Hands (see page 124). In the fifteenth century, as the ultimate disaster approached, the city was isolated and abandoned. The Roman Pope had already broken with the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1054 because of doctrinal differences. The emperor had followed his lead only reluctantly. A union with the Roman Church at the Council of Florence-Ferrara held shortly before the catastrophe was not taken seriously in the West, partly because of the machinations of the European powers. After a general offensive by the forces of the Turkish Sultan Mehmet II, the city was conquered on May 29, 1453. Along with countless human lives, precious cultural treasures were lost, including icons. "Konstantinopolis" as a name survived in the play of the consonants and vowels of its Turkish equivalent, Istanbul. Mehmet II proclaimed the city the capital of his Islamic empire, and Hagia Sophia was consecrated its principal mosque.

Byzantium had transmitted what is called the "Byzantine style" to numerous peoples on the Balkan Peninsula, in Russia, Asia Minor, and the East, a style unique and unmistakable, but with a history nothing short of shocking. The place of the icon in this history is by no means insignificant.

Page 34: Mother of God with Saints, Byzantine, fourteenth century.
The central figure of this icon is the Eleusa Mother of God, with the Child Jesus sitting on her left arm, lovingly nestled against her cheek. This pictorial type of the mother with child presumably comes from Egypt, and had spread throughout the entire Byzantine cultural sphere by the tenth century. The central figure is encircled by fourteen saints, in a kind of frame. Such juxtapositions of central and peripheral figures were very popular with the icon painters; the number and identity of the saints varied according to the monastery or the wishes of the patron.

Above: Two Doctors of the Church in episcopal garb, Byzantine, fourteenth century.
Athanasius (d. 373), Patriarch of Alexandria, fought the heresy of Arianism; Cyril, also Patriarch of Alexandria (d. 444), prevailed over Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus (431).

CONSTANTINOPOL

THE PRELUDE: EMPEROR JUSTINIAN (527–565)

The significance of Byzantine style is exemplified in the famous mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna. These pictures represent an entire epoch: on one side we see the Emperor Justinian holding a sacred paten for the eucharistic bread in his hands, surrounded by Maximianus, the Bishop of Ravenna, and other high dignitaries and palace guards; on the other side we see the Empress Theodora with the eucharistic chalice, also surrounded by the imperial court. Here we see Byzantine style, or rather Byzantine demeanor, always maintaining the "bearing," a characteristic shared by the images of the saints in wall paintings as well as icons.

A glance at the historical events of Justinian's era provides insight into the history of Byzantium in general: This "bearing" was continually threatened, and had to be maintained constantly in the face of opposition and dangers, both internal and external. Internally, the empire was shaken and eventually split by the Monophysite Heresy, a doctrine held especially by the Copts in Egypt, which taught that Christ did not have two natures (both divine and human), but rather only one, divine, nature.

Externally, the imperial borders were under constant siege by new migrating hordes. Slavs, Goths and Turks pushed out from the depths of Asia, often overrunning the borders. Above all, however, it was the sworn enemy of the Roman Empire, the ancient Persian dynasty of the Sassanids, which had set as its national goal the destruction of the empire to its west, that bided its time beyond the deserts and steppes of the Near East. Justinian was able to hold off this enemy with high tribute payments, but under his successor, Emperor Heraclius (d. 641), the impending calamity finally occurred. While hordes of Slavs threatened Byzantium from the north, Sassanid forces were able to penetrate deep into Asia Minor.

This period of political catastrophe was, however, the icon's finest hour. The icon of Christ Not Made by Hands became the safeguard and shield of the Empire against the "haters and enemies of God." According to the extant written documents, the life of the Emperor Heraclius appears to be much like that of a saint on the icons of the time.

Page 36: Earliest panoramic view of Constantinople, 1420.
In this manuscript from the *Liber insularum archepelagi* by Buondelmonte, we can see clearly the position of the city on a triangular projection of land, surrounded on three sides by water. In the center of the city, some of the most important historical monuments of antiquity can be seen, among them Hagia Sophia, visible above on the right.

Above: Mosaics from San Vitale, Ravenna, sixth century.
Both mosaics in this church, consecrated in 547, show the Emperor Justinian I and the Empress Theodora with attendants. The Emperor, with Bishop Maximianus at his side, is carrying a paten holding bread offered at the liturgy, while the Empress holds the eucharistic chalice. These pictures, with their radiant colors (primarily blue, green, and gold), the darkened eye sockets of the faces and the distinct textures of their garments, are unsurpassed high points in Byzantine mosaic art.

Above: Deësis fragment, center section of a mosaic icon, Constantinople, late thirteenth century.
In the southern gallery of Hagia Sophia we see this deësis fragment, on which only the figure of Christ is still preserved. The face of Christ, presented here as Pantocrator with sovereignty and dignity in the tradition of the Byzantine renaissance, with his hand raised in blessing, radiates the grandeur and authority of the Son of God, which is focused on the beholder.

Page 39: Mother of God with Child, mosaic in Hagia Sophia, ninth century.
Mary, her son sitting in her lap, with a scroll and cross-shaped nimbus which already identify him as the Christ, looks down from the dome of the apse into the nave of the church. The three stars on her robe symbolize the virginity of the Mother of God. This expansive image of the enthroned Mary is monumental in effect and embodies with her child the Wisdom of God, to which this most magnificent of all the churches in Constantinople was dedicated.

For a time given to worldly pleasures, he then turned to strict asceticism, with fasting, abstinence, and vigils. The sources, in describing a distinct personality, violate the fixed literary pattern that had long been normative for imperial panegyrics. This trait also distinguishes the icons of the period preserved in the monastery of Saint Catherine on Sinai during the iconoclast vandalism. These icons, whether of Christ, the Mother of God, an apostle, or other saint, are all lifelike portraits. They have none of the stylization, none of the "cloned" appearance, that later became characteristic of iconography.

The age of Justinian ranks among "the most creative periods of human history, in which not only intellectual ideas and literature flourished, but also architecture and art."[2] Hagia Sophia, built by Justinian between 532 and 537, and imitated in many cities of the Empire, still stands out today as an impressive witness to this era; for *sophia*, the Wisdom of God, is also the wisdom of the sovereign.

With the defeat of iconoclasm in 843 (see page 20), Byzantium had taken the important step from late antiquity into the Middle Ages. Old traditions had to be reevaluated; old techniques of painting were replaced by others. Egg tempera painting definitively replaced the encaustic (wax color) technique. The concepts of the sacred image had been adequately defined by iconophile theologians, and had received canonical status through the decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787. The iconographic workshops of the capital themselves formed the basis for a distinctive, albeit diverse, school. Last but not least was the succession of ruling families and even whole dynasties in Byzantium, whose patronage brought change and an amazing variety to this basically conservative sacred art.

2 Gervase Matthew.

Above: Saint Eudocia, marble inlay, tenth or eleventh century.
Marble intarsias were in existence as early as the fourth to sixth centuries. During the Macedonian Renaissance this technique began to be used anew. The marble icon of Saint Eudocia is a beautiful example of how an effective two-dimensional design could be achieved with inlays of colored glass, colorful pieces of marble, and gems of glass paste.

Left: Saint Demetrius, cloisonné, eleventh century.
The patron saint of Thessalonika is presented here in the ceremonial garb of a high-ranking court official with his own insignia, the *tablion*, an inlaid rectangle. The tunic is overlaid with the finest of gold wire and the *chlamys*, or cape, is dotted with heart-shaped cells coated with red enamel.

Page 41: Archangel Michael in half-figure, repoussé, second half of the tenth century.
This extremely precious icon of repoussé, gilded silver, pure gold, gems, and cloisonné was taken as booty by the Venetians from Constantinople to the treasury of Saint Mark's in 1204, where it found new use as the centerpiece on the cover of a Gospel book.

ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤΗΣ
ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤΗΣ
ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤΗΣ
ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤΗΣ
ΜΡΘΥ
ΙΣ
ΧΣ
ΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ
ΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ
ΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΣΥΡΑΤΙΗΛ
ΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΟΥΡΙΗΛ
ΙΑΚΩΒ
ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΣ
ΠΕΤΡΟΣ
ΠΑΥΛΟΣ
ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ

Left: Harbaville Triptych, ivory relief, tenth century.
Created during the Second Golden Age of Byzantine art, this triptych is a masterpiece of ivory carving. In the centerpiece at the top, Christ sits enthroned, surrounded by Mary and John turning toward him in supplication; underneath them we can see *(left to right)* the apostles James, John, Peter, Paul, and Andrew. On the side panels are warrior saints standing side by side, and underneath them saints holding crosses. Before this folding, portable altarpiece reached the Louvre in Paris, it was part of the Harbaville Collection after which it is named.

Below: Triptych, gold with repoussé and cloisonné, Georgian, eighth to ninth century.
This triptych from Georgia has led to widely differing conjectures as to its origins; the artistic quality of the repoussé of the side panels indicates an origin in Constantinople, while the enamelwork of the middle section displays

characteristics typical of Georgian peasant art. The missing central figure is undoubtedly the Christ in repoussé, since its removal did not damage the enamel figures of Mary and John. It may be that an artist from Constantinople worked on this piece in Tiflis and intentionally included Georgian stylistic elements.

The diverse artistic concepts associated with the respective dynasties are called "renaissances," because in them definite trends reappear from Classical and late-Classical or Hellenistic art, albeit in a new cultural milieu.

The rule of the Amorium Dynasty (820–867) differed from that of earlier periods, in particular that of Justinian. The official language was now Greek, not Latin. More attention was given to Greek traditions in art and literature, and to their contrast with the traditions of the Roman West. The Empire was divided up anew; the administration became leaner and more efficient. Church and State, which under Justinian had almost "beat with one heart," now formed "a single, dual-functioning organism." The relationship between the two was regulated through concordat-like agreements, or frequently simply by *ad hoc* arrangements. The acute antagonism that had arisen between Church and State during the Iconoclastic Controversy gave way to more moderate attitudes. Attempts were made, at least on the part of the emperors, to let the matter "become history." The political and cultural atmosphere during the reign of the Macedonian emperors,[3] which led to a new beginning for icon painting, was also greatly influenced by the definitive decisions of two church councils that had ruled in favor of iconography.

From a chaotic tangle of intrigue and murder, Basil I (d. 886), himself a master at such matters, worked his way up from being a farmer's son in Macedonia and a groom in the imperial stables to the throne of the Roman Empire. Basil had a commanding presence and quickly became a great statesman, ushering in the Macedonian Renaissance in culture, jurisprudence, and administration. In church affairs the frequently deposed and reinstated Patriarch Photios (d. 891), one of the most erudite persons of his day, played a decisive role; his far-reaching missionary and political strategy led to the evangelization of pagan Slavs in the Balkans and Russia. Some of these emperors were outstanding military leaders, such as Basil II (976–1025), who had his nickname, *Bulgaroktonos*, ("Bulgar-killer") inscribed in his own Psalter; others were highly educated scholars like Constantine VII Porphyrogennetus[4] (913–959). This same emperor wrote a panegyric in honor of a precious relic which was a treasure of the Empire, the icon of Christ Not Made by Hands (see page 124), recovered in 944 by the Emperor Romanus I.

Along with the other arts, and thoroughly integrated with them, painters' workshops shared in the economic boom of the epoch. This prosperity resulted from the organization of the various occupations into guilds, including those for artists. These guilds were subject to imperial authority in order to control their monopolistic tendencies, particularly in the distribution of raw materials. These complicated relationships can only be alluded to here; but they formed the precondition for the distinctly elitist character of icon art during the Macedonian period. This elitism was ensured not only by commissions from the highest echelons of society, but also by the cost of the materials used, the most luxurious of which was imported ivory (see page 245).

The ivorywork that is still preserved is inspiring in the quality of its craftsmanship. In the detailing of facial expressions and the folds of garments, and in the rendering of background details such as buildings, the pieces surpass even their predecessors. These ivory pieces are referred to collectively as the Romanus Group, though most of them cannot be conclusively associated with the emperors of that name. These figures frequently approach three-dimensionality; in fact, free-standing sculptures in ivory were not unusual.

The second elitist material was gold enamel. Of all the marvelous achievements of Byzantine enamelwork, almost exclusively executed in cloisonné, the greatest is the cruciform Limburg reliquary, which dates from about 965.

Finally, icons of classic grandeur and true elegance, appropriate even for the Mother of God, were created of stone mosaic, another luxury material.

After the Iconoclastic Controversy, there is a decided and increasing influence from both Sassanid Persian and Islamic culture in Byzantine art, particularly in enamel and mosaic work. This, of course, includes not only the subjects of the icons and the manner of their veneration in general, but also the production techniques and the expressiveness of the colors. This phenomenon is not a new one; there are precedents in late

Page 44: Mosaic icon with painted wooden frame, Constantinople, fourteenth century.
Inside a narrow mosaic border are four fields of equal size in which we can see the half-figures of four venerable bearded men in priestly garb, each holding a Gospel book in his hand. Starting with the upper figure on the left and moving clockwise, they are the Church Fa-

thers John Chrysostom *(above left)*, Basil the Great *(above right)*, Nicholas of Myra *(below left)*, and Gregory. The combination of a mosaic icon with a wide, painted wooden frame is unusual. On the top edge we can recognize a deësis group; most of the other figures encircling the central panels are ruined.

Above: David as a Christian Orpheus, book illumination, early tenth century.
In this 26cm x 36cm picture, the first of a series of fourteen in the Paris Psalter, we see how the animals in David's herd listen motionlessly as he plays the harp. Next to David sits a nymph, the goddess of the city Bethlehem. This pleasant bucolic scene testifies to the reawakening of ancient Classical art traditions at the time of the Macedonian rulers.

3 . This dynasty ruled from 867 to 1056.
4 Means "born to the purple."

Above: Hodegetria Mother of God, ivory tablet, mid-tenth century.
The most famous Marian image in Constantinople was the Hodegetria Madonna, so named because it was kept in the Hodegon Monastery. Although it was lost during the siege of the city in 1453, it was preserved for us in countless copies made from the most varied materials. This beautiful ivory relief, center section of a triptych, is one example. Mary directs our attention to the Child Jesus, who sits as if weightless on her left arm. The folds of her garment are arranged gracefully, and produce a harmony of form that suggests a workshop of the imperial court.

Page 47: Deësis with Angels, Apostles, and Saints; cover of the Limburg cruciform reliquary, second half of the tenth century.
This container for a relic of a piece of the Cross of Christ was fashioned from expensive materials. The middle part of the cover, made from gilded silver with precious gems and enamel inlays, contains nine panels. The three figures in the middle are a deësis group, flanked by archangels. The six figures above and below the middle are specified as the twelve apostles. The figures of the middle section, as well as the small portraits of the saints in the frame, are of the finest enamelwork. This utterly splendid reliquary was commissioned in Constantinople by Basil, son of the Emperor Romanus I Lacapenus, who was *Proedros* or Leader of the Senate from 963.

antiquity. In fact the cultural exchange between West and East was not halted, not even interrupted, even during the most bitter wars between the Roman and the Persian Empires. The era of the Emperor Justinian, famous for mosaic work in both Byzantium and Italy, carried on this tradition. This resulted in the creative tensions that produced the palette of magical Eastern colors that influenced all the cultures that succeeded Byzantium.

With Basil II, the Byzantine Empire reached the pinnacle of its power. Of all the Byzantine sovereigns he was the "soldier Emperor," who, though unyielding in his demands both on himself and his subordinates, was prudent in his dealings with conquered peoples. We can see his disposition in particular in his policy towards the Bulgars, without which an independent Bulgarian culture and a Bulgarian tradition of icon painting would be inconceivable (see page 52). He was not only able to resist Moslem expansion in Asia Minor, but he was also victorious over rebellious aristocrats, and brought a politically ambitious Russia into the Byzantine sphere of influence by marrying his sister Anna to Vladimir of Kiev.

The dynasties that followed had to govern a constantly shrinking empire, which was eventually reduced to the capital, Constantinople, before it fell in 1204 to the Crusaders and then in 1453 to the Turks. The time period between 1204 and 1453 was the *fin de siècle* of Byzantium. During this period Byzantine "bearing," together with a remarkable self-irony (not uncommon in situations in which one's very existence stands in the balance), created once again an admirable culture, which found a particularly intimate expression in icon painting.

Under Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118), a theologically articulate military leader and distinguished diplomat, a conflict arose concerning the doctrine of the Bogomils (named for their founder, Bogomil), who, with other dualistic sects like the Cathars and Patarenes in the West, the Paulicians of Asia Minor, and other groups during the High Middle Ages, threatened not only the Balkans but all of Europe. The denial of the incarnation of Christ and the consequent rejection of the veneration of the Mother of God and of icons were central tenets of their doctrine, which found a home in Bosnia.[5] Under the Turks, the Bogomils, unlike the Orthodox Christians, had no difficulty accepting Islam. Though the Bogomils had an inner circle of leaders, like the Moslems, they had no hierarchically organized clergy or supreme magisterial authority, and both were philosophically opposed to icons. (Historically, this assimilation forms the basis of the current tragedy in Bosnia.) But even the Bogomils could not get around the need for religious art as a means of identity. This is evident in the famous Bosnian Bogomil Stones, gravestones that reflect their pessimistic worldview. Many masterpieces of Christian art, both in the East and in the West, were created in opposition to this heresy.

Alexius was threatened not only by the Turks and the peoples of the Balkans, but also by the Normans, who had conquered Byzantine territories in Italy. Seeking help in the West, he negotiated with Latin Crusaders, while, in a complicated diplomatic double-cross, he maneuvered them into a simultaneous engagement against the Osmanli Turks in the Holy Land. But it was precisely the Crusades that escalated the discord between Christian East and West into open conflict, reaching a sad zenith with the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204. Still, at this time, as a result of the encounter between Latin concepts of religious imagery and the icon piety of the Orthodox East, a new type of icon came into being: the "icons of the crusaders" (see page 72).

5 Called Bosana by the Byzantines.

As Michael VIII Palaeologus 1261–1262) triumphantly entered the city of Constantinople on August 15, 1261, amid great jubilation of the inhabitants, it did indeed mark the end of Latin rule; at the same time it was the beginning of the slow death process for Byzantium and for the culture without which Europe could scarcely have ever acquired the knowledge of Classical erudition and art. With Emperor Michael, there ascended the throne of the Romans a dynasty whose last incumbent, Constantine XI, would meet his death on the walls of the city when Mehmet II ordered the general attack on May 19, 1453. The death throes of one of the world's most significant cultures, lasting two centuries, constitute a fascinating chapter in the history of humankind.

Attacked from without and gradually reduced to its own municipal borders, Byzantium was also threatened from within. Religious and social revolutionary ideas combined in a movement of fanatical monks, the Zealots, while at the same time opposing groups of monks, the Hesychasts,[6] under the influence of radical mystical tendencies stemming from Mount Athos, committed themselves to absolute silence in order to escape the turbulence of the times. Though the Hesychasts' practice of sitting motionless and contemplating their navels met with ridicule from their contemporaries, Gregory Palamas, a distinguished theologian and Orthodox bishop, was able to creatively channel the monks' wild visions of the "uncreated light" through his careful theological reflections. Continuing echoes of those visions of light are, however, still found in Russian icons of the Transfiguration of Christ, in which a disciple clothed in a delicate pink robe of light holds his hands in front of his eyes, blinded by the uncreated light emanating from Christ (see page 108).

It is not an exaggeration to read the art of this time as the medical chart of a terminally ill patient. What we see in the figures of the Chora Church in Constantinople (built between 1081 and 1118, with new interior mosaics in 1313) can also be perceived in numerous icons: The sacred figures are characterized by a strange inner agitation. Quick movements, and the frequent piercing glances from the corner of the eyes, are signs of this mental state. The Byzantine painter Theophanes the Greek, known to Russians as Feofan Grek (see page 84), was able to express this mood of the times even in the subdued language of the icon.

6 Greek, *hesychia*, "silence, quiet," from which the word Hesychasm is derived.

Page 48: Head of Saint Peter. Feofan Grek, end of the fourteenth century.
The icon of the full figure of the Apostle Peter to which this detail of the head belongs, is one of the masterpieces of Theophanes the Greek, done in Moscow while he was painting for the Cathedral of the Annunciation. The overly slender figures of this master have a spiritual quality, which is also evident in this head of Peter. The narrow face, with the meditative eyes placed close to the straight nose, is topped by a heavy head of hair, suggesting the lively temperament of the Prince of the Apostles.

Above: Detail of mosaic from the Chora Church (Kariye Djami), Constantinople, early fourteenth century.
Theodore Metochites, advisor to the Emperor Andronicus II, had the Church adjacent to his palace fitted out with mosaics between 1307 and 1320. These are the last great mosaic decorations of Constantinople. In the detail we see three high priests sitting at a set table looking to the left at Joachim, who rushes in carrying the little Mary on his arm to have her blessed.

Saint David, relief icon, Thessalonika, eleventh century.
Although numerous ivory carvings can be found from pre-Iconoclastic times, Christian stone reliefs did not appear until the tenth or eleventh centuries. Christians were reluctant from the very beginning to set up fully three-dimensional statues, since such figures reminded people of the images of pagan gods and presented a temptation to return to the old idolatry. Only after the end of the Iconoclastic Controversy, when the validity of visual representation of holy persons was given a clear theological definition, did large stone reliefs flourish. This marble icon shows Saint David, whose sloping shoulders and gathered robe on this flat relief almost give the effect of a drawing.

The great mountain range between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, divided into countless smaller ranges, was called Haemus both in antiquity and in the Byzantine era; but in the Turkish period it came to be called the "Bulkan" Range. Just as complicated and, at first glance, as confusing as the many legends in many languages surrounding these mountains, is the history of the peoples who traveled through the peninsula or who settled in its valleys. In the early Byzantine era, Goths, Huns, Avars, and Slavic tribes made their way into this land. At first, the rulers of the Byzantine Empire were not particularly interested in conquering the territory, at least as long as it was possible to fend off the bordering tribes with tribute payments. The situation changed when, after having lost parts of the Empire in the East and Asia Minor, Byzantium had to turn its attention toward the Balkans. During the reign of Emperor Heraclius (610–641), and with his permission, Croats and Serbs who had migrated from across the Carpathian Mountains to the Balkan Peninsula settled here. As time passed they developed into independent states. The Croats came under the influence of Rome and of Catholic Hungary during the High Middle Ages, became Latin-rite, and were thus lost to Byzantine influence, unlike the Bulgarians and Serbs.

Before we turn our attention to the peoples of the Balkans, we must consider an achievement of Byzantine culture of such extraordinary significance that it has even affected world history. In 863, the priest Constantine (later named Cyril), a gifted philologist, philosopher, and poet, invented the Old Slavic (Church Slavonic) alphabet. He came from Thessalonika, a city surrounded by Slavic tribes, the most significant Byzantine city after Constantinople, and for our purposes uniquely important. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians of Thessalonika, "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?"[7] And Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer, our constant companion throughout the Empire of the Romans, devoted an entire enthusiastic chapter to this city, in praise not only of the soft coastal breezes and its mild skies, but also of the "tolerant attitude of its inhabitants." In fact, Thessalonika felt that it, even more than Constantinople, was the heir of Hellenistic culture. For the Thessalonians there was no Emperor of the Romans, but only of the Hellenes. A commentary on Homer was written on the walls of the city in the twelfth century. Far removed from Emperor and Patriarch, the inhabitants frequently made fun of them, but they also made fun of themselves. Just as in the city on the Bosporus, there was also in the middle of this city a Cathedral of Saint Sophia, although it was not of such gigantic dimensions. Even the church choirs of both cathedrals competed with each other. And it was with a bit of Hellenistic irony that the city officials rationalized cutting off the salaries of the professors of philosophy by saying that the professors had already left the world anyway! It was in this politically liberal, culturally open environment that Constantine grew up.[8] With a precise knowledge of the Slavic language, he developed a new written form using the cursive form of the Greek alphabet, some letters based on Hebrew letters, and his own imagination.

This new written form was called Glagolitic;[9] its rounded form became the norm in Bulgaria and its angular form in Croatia. In Croatia, Glagolitic writing became the symbol of cultural sovereignty and was not replaced by the Latin alphabet until the nineteenth century. The Cyrillic alphabet emerged in Bulgaria-Macedonia at the turn of the ninth to the tenth century, becoming over time the form of writing of the eastern Slavic peoples. The invention of this alphabet was simultaneously the birth of Byzantine-Slav Orthodoxy, a cultural domain that ultimately extended across Russia and Siberia to the Pacific Ocean. We should keep this in mind when we study the icons of this Byzantine-Slav Orthodoxy, as distinguished from icons of other cultural regions. Without the inscriptions abbreviated on the icons in Church Slavonic, they would have remained "speechless" for the Slavs.

Thessalonika is, however, significant not only because of the invention of the Slavic alphabet, but also because of its icon painting. The brothers Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius, who were friends of the Slavs, lived during the final period of the Iconoclastic Controversy; yet their biographers tell of the unequivocally iconophilic stance of both men, as well as that of the general populace. When there is a reference to an

Above: Saint Anastasia, Byzantine icon, Thessalonika, fourteenth to fifteenth century. According to tradition, Anastasia was burned as a martyr during the persecutions of the Christians in 303. In her narrow face, the eyes look solemnly into the distance, as if she sees her fate. She clings firmly to the cross in her right hand, the sign of her unshakable faith. Her covered left hand holds an ampoule filled with consecrated oil.

Left: Saint Demetrius Standing between Two Dignitaries, Thessalonika, around 635. This mosaic is on the south pillar of the apse of Hagios Demetrios. Saint Demetrius and his two companions stand side by side, their heads turned directly toward the viewer. At his right is Bishop John, who had the church rebuilt after it burned down in 625, and at his left, a high-ranking patron with a purse in his hand. Their garments are adorned with geometric patterns; this lends the icon an unusually vivid charm, yet leaves the depicted persons looking lifeless.

eikon in these sources, the word, of course, refers at this time to every sacred image, whether it be wall painting, book illumination, or icon painting in the usual sense. There are very few extant icons from the iconoclastic period or the period immediately following it; the few preserved specimens are usually relief icons in marble or stone. When the *Vita Methodius* recounts how he and his colleagues placed their translation of the Holy Scriptures under the patronage of Saint Demetrius, we may well assume that an icon of this saint was present, before which the translators said their prayers. The invention of the Slavic alphabet and the missionary work of the two brothers within the context of the beginning canonical regulation of image veneration demonstrates yet again the characteristic unity for Byzantine culture of literary and artistic creation. A heritage of classicism, this unity is again found in icon painting as a symphony of text and image.

7 I Thessalonians 2:19.

8 He received the name Cyril shortly before his death in 869, when he joined a Greek monastery in Rome.

9 From the Slavic, meaning "what is spoken in word."

Left: Saint Clement of Ochrid, fourteenth or fifteenth century.
Above the ascetic face of the saint, which seems even narrower because of the pointed beard, the forehead and skull appear oversized, a sign of his wisdom.

Right: Mother of God, Rescuer of Souls, Ochrid, early fourteenth century.
Mary, shown here in the type of the Hodegetria, is specifically designated as *psychosoteria*, "rescuer of souls." This exemplar is a double icon, with the Annunciation scene on the back (illustration on the following page at the right).

The invention of the Old Church Slavonic alphabet would have remained a purely academic matter had it not also been bound up with extensive missionary activity. This activity was carried out by Constantine (Cyril) and his brother Methodius in the face of strong opposition from Rome and the Frankish church, first among Moravian Slavs, but then in the Crimea and southern Russia. After their deaths, their students continued their work. One of them, Clement (d. 916), who was also from Thessalonika but of Slavic descent, accompanied the brothers on their many missionary journeys. After Glavnica, the primary focus of his missionary and literary activities was Ochrid, which was elevated by the Bulgarian King to the rank of an archdiocese, and whose sphere of influence included Bulgaria, Serbia, and Macedonia.

The magnificent eleventh century frescoes in the Church of Saint Sophia in Ochrid are evidence of this city's importance in central Bulgarian art and literature. Most of the extant icons of the Ochrid School of painting from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were commissioned by wealthy sovereigns and princes, and are characterized by a certain elegance and restraint. The work of indigenous artists, without which no true art can develop, was combined with the knowledge of immigrant artists, or of foreign artists temporarily in the country to fulfill a commission. (Not surprisingly, many of these immigrant or foreign artists came from Greece.) The "flash" inherent in Byzantine art was subdued somewhat by exposure to native forms, and the result was the creation of an art of distinctly national character.

Conspicuously present both in wall painting and in icons is the figure of Saint Demetrius, patron saint of Thessalonika, who eventually became the principal patron of all the Slavs. There is also a preference for Saint Clement of Ochrid, although his icons

Left: Saint Demetrius of Thessalonika, Bulgarian, end of the seventeenth century.
On his red horse in the pose of a youthful hero, Demetrius slays Lysios, a gladiator of the hostile pagan emperor, with his lance.

tend to be of a later date. The Byzantine influence is almost unbroken until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. One of the most beautiful examples is an icon presented by the Byzantine Empress to a Bulgarian monastery in 1395. On this icon, the Mother of God listens with bowed head to the Evangelist John, both of them rendered in the classical pose and gesture of dialogue.

The center of icon painting in Bulgaria, which reached its zenith in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was Trnovo. It was here that, in the nineteenth century, entire generations of painters, including many priests, created, out of the unspoiled insights and traditional tastes of a half-rural, half-urban populace, the true renaissance of the Bulgarian icon. The icons from these workshops helped maintain a national religious identity even during the Turkish domination.

Above: Annunciation to Mary, Ochrid, early fourteenth century.
This painting is not by the same master as the icon of the Mother of God Rescuer of Souls (illustration on the preceding page right). Typical for early Palaeologus art is the whirlwind entrance of the angel, with wings still spread and with full-flowing robes, creating thereby a diagonal movement toward Mary, who moves to the side and makes a parrying motion with her hand. The contrast between the bright tones of the angel and the dark figure of the Mother of God under the colorful baldachin is very charming, and bespeaks high artistic quality.

ΜΡ
ΘΥ
ΙΩ
Ο
ΘΕΟΛΟ
ΓΟΣ

СТЫЙ
КИ
СТЫЙ
ЛЬВОВЪ
АБВГД
ЄЖЗІЇК
ЛМНОП
РСТѲФХ
ѾЦЧШЩ
ЪЫЬЭЮ
ѦѨѪѲѴ

Page 54: Mary and the Evangelist John, Sofia, 1395.
The elongated figures of Mary, completely enshrouded in her robe, and of John, turned towards her, stand out in sharp contrast to the green and gold background. An unusual juxtaposition of the grieving Mother of God with John, who seems to be offering her comfort and consolation. This beautiful icon was commissioned by the Empress Helena, spouse of Manuel II, in honor of her father, who had been killed in the war with the Turks; it was sent to the Monastery of Saint John in Poganova. Helena was the granddaughter of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander.

Page 55: The Apostles to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius, Paskal Vassilev, 1859.
On this icon both brothers are holding a scroll containing the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet, used in their translations into Church Slavonic. Cyril, whose baptismal name was Constantine, the principal creator and namesake of the Slavic alphabet, entered a monastery in Rome in 869 shortly before his death, taking the monastic name Kyrillos. His brother attempted unsuccessfully to establish a Slavic national Church in the then greater Moravian Kingdom, an action that led to imprisonment in his brother's monastery from 870 to 873.

Page 57: Saints Simeon and Sava, Hilandar (?), fifteenth century.
Stephen Nemanja, under whose leadership Serbia was established as an independent state, entered the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos in 1196 as Monk Simeon. This icon shows him with the double cross in his hand. On his right stands his son Sava wearing the white archepiscopal *omophorion* with a pattern of large crosses over a *sakkos* in the *polystavron* pattern. This icon, radiating a deep religious conviction and dignity, was most probably painted in the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos.

Serbia (or Raska, as it was named in the Middle Ages, after its central region), won its religious and, consequently, its cultural independence through the missionary activity of the followers of Cyril and Methodius. As elsewhere in missionary areas, the frescoes in churches large and small (equivalent in religious meaning to icons) served as homiletic illustrations and visual aids to baptismal instruction. The first flowering of religious art took place only when Serbia entered into the history of Southeastern Europe as an independent state alongside Byzantium. This happened under Great Zupan (Grand Duke) Stephen Nemanja (d. 1199), one of the most impressive personages of his time. He was a foe of Byzantium (consequently, among other things, he negotiated with Emperor Frederick Barbarossa); nevertheless he remained deeply awed by the culture of his arch-enemy. This altogether productive dichotomy in Stephen's leadership style left its imprint on the religious art, which was oriented to the norms of Orthodoxy, and which came to be called the Raskian Renaissance. In 1196 Stephen entered the Hilandar Monastery at Athos. It is said that at his death his son, the monk Sava, held an icon of Mary before his face. Next to the Mother of God and the "super saint" Nicholas, the Nemanjans and their people venerated in particular great military saints like George, Demetrius, and Theodore the Recruit. However, it was Stephen Nemanja especially who, as the monk Simeon, entered into the image world of the Eastern Church. He is shown in icons with his son Sava, who was the first archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Church. Sava's brother, Stephen the First-crowned, became King of Serbia after his father took the religious habit.

Only obscure written sources exist from this early period. As in other places, it was customary to make "authentic" copies of earlier works of church art, which were regarded as prototypes. In this way, icons such as the Hilandar Mother of God and the Studenica Mother of God came into being. As far as we can tell, the religious painting of early Raska was straightforward and Slavic in character. This primitive form may have survived in isolated villages and workshops; however, the establishment of the Nemanjan dynasty resulted in the adoption of a more imposing elitist style of religious art, a style influenced by Byzantine prototypes. Many icons, especially those of Christ, show distinct evidence of competition between the realism of early Western Gothic elements and the formal idealism of late Byzantine or Greek stylistic elements. This is to be expected in the regions of the Dalmatian coast common to both Latin and Greek culture. These polarities and the various possibilities of surmounting and transforming them are what constitute the particular appeal of Serbian painting.

In the fourteenth century, the Metropolitan Jovan, himself a painter, played an important role as a patron of religious art. One of Jovan's brothers painted the famous Pelagonitissa Mother of God in 1422 (see page 167 f.), the prototype for which had been created a century earlier. The strikingly engaging way in which the Christ Child, with his left hand on his mother's cheek, looks at the viewer—a century earlier he was still looking at the mother—led art historians to classify this icon as the Mother of Tenderness. Such a previously unknown attempt to render so vividly the relationship between Mary and her child may be regarded as an answer by the Orthodox Church to the teaching of the Bogomils, who along with the incarnation of Christ also rejected the idea of Jesus' having this kind of a relationship with his mother.

All the Balkan rulers of the High Middle Ages, along with their Churches, had to deal with the Bogomil heresy. Pelagonia was a center of this movement, and the fact that the creation of this icon is so closely associated with a member of the Serbian hierarchy reinforces the supposition that its purpose was to counter the heresy. This hypothesis becomes practically a certainty when we learn that the brothers Jovan and Makarije themselves come from Prilep, another one of the centers of the Babuni, as the Bogomils were called in Serbia.

A new phase of the visual arts in Serbia began with King Milutin (1282–1321). Conquests of Byzantine and Bulgarian areas catapulted Serbia to second-ranking power in the Balkans, next to Byzantium. This had an effect on all areas of architecture and painting. The saints, especially Stephen Nemanja, Sava, and other military saints, appear more self-assured, more "Serbian." Commissions to paint icons, especially

ЧЕДА
МОМЪ
ЗЛЮБЛИ
ПЛАДЪ
ЧНТЕГИ
СЪМНОГ
БЫКУПИ

Right: Mother of God with the Three Hands, Russian, around 1700.
This icon is attributed to Saint Luke and is considered miraculous. It is said that John of Damascus (d. circa 750), whose hand was cut off by order of the iconoclastic Emperor Leo III, prayed in front of this icon, and immediately the severed hand, which he had with him, grew back. In memory of this miracle, a third, silver-plated hand was added to the icon. Then the icon miraculously transported itself to the Hilandar Monastery and placed itself on the abbot's chair, for which reason the monks there venerate it as an abbot.

Left: Four Holy Warriors, Georgy Mitrofanovic, 1618.
The names of these military saints are given on this icon in their Slavic versions. From left to right, they are: Demetrius of Thessalonika, George, Artemius, and Procopius. Artemius was martyred because he had resisted Julian the Apostate; his head is always painted in a style iconographically similar to the head of Christ.

icons for the iconostasis in churches, began to pour in, placing greater demands on the painters' workshops. Commissions from the reigning family not only provided further impetus to raising the quality of icon painting, but also fostered the development of an indigenous style. All these factors led to what was called the Milutin School. After the incorporation of Byzantine and Macedonian areas under Stephen Dušan (1331–1335), Serbia reached the height of its power in the Balkans; thereafter Dušan called himself the Tsar of the Serbs and Romans.

Among Dušan's conquests was Ochrid, whose workshops, though of the old tradition, were open to fruitful, creative influences from the Dalmatian coast. Alongside simple but immediately appealing works of icon art are now found depictions, inspired by late Byzantine art, that show slender, supple figures in a clearly perceived spatial setting. Thus the two-dimensional surface is transformed into three-dimensionality, at first cautiously and experimentally, but perhaps already showing evidence of a system of linear perspective. With its religious painting, Serbia, like its neighbors in the Balkans, possessed all the prerequisites for the transition from the Late Middle Ages to modern times. But this process came to an end with the victory of the Turks on June 15, 1389, over the united troops of the Serbs and Bosnians at the Field of Blackbirds (Kosovo Polje). Of course, there were still painting workshops in villages and towns, as elsewhere in the Balkans, where the old traditions survived, and which here and there even adopted ideas from the Latin West, but the time of the great renaissances was gone forever. In 1453, the Turks stood at the gates of Constantinople.

Left: Royal Doors of an Iconostasis, Šiševo near Skopje.
On the doors of the iconostasis in the Church of Saint Nicholas in Šiševo, we see the figures of Mary and the Angel of the Annunciation in a wooden bas relief with a wide frame.

Above: Pelagonitissa Mother of God, Serbian, fifteenth century.
This processional icon shows the Mother of God with the Child, who is caressing the cheek of his mother while turning toward the viewer. This is a rustic imitation of the masterpiece Pelagonitissa Mother of God painted by Makarije Zographos in 1421 to 1422 (named for the town of Pelagonia in Macedonia). In spite of stylistic weaknesses, such as the exaggerated limpness of the child's arms and the lack of depth in the treatment of Mary's robe, this depiction of mother and child, which fills practically the entire space of the picture, produces an unusually powerful effect, one that is intensified by the small angels in the upper corners.

Saints Anna and Joachim, Behind-glass painting, 1804.
The parents of Mary stand on a green meadow in a stylized landscape with a golden sky behind them. Anna, clothed in Transylvanian peasant costume, holds her tightly swaddled child in her arms; Joachim, in Roman garb, points prophetically to the child, the future Mother of God. This small glass icon (31.3cm x 25cm) comes from the region of Alba Julia.

The Descent from the Cross, Catholicon[10] of the Monastery of Curtea de Arges, 1522–1523.
To the left of this impressive Pieta we see the smaller figure of a woman in a dark cloak holding in her arms a child wearing a crown. This represents Princess Despina Milita, who commissioned this icon, in mourning for her dead son Theodosius.

10 A catholicon is the main church in a monastic compound.

The history of this people, who belong only tangentially to the Byzantine-Slav cultural community, begins when their ancestors—Albanian and Wallachian nomadic shepherds—became romanized, that is, when their language was latinized. Their migration into the Carpathian region in 1210 is well documented. They settled in Transylvania and in the bordering Banat region. In the fourteenth century, the duchies of Moldavia and Wallachia were established, eventually developing into a more or less independent national and cultural unit stretching to the Danube and the Black Sea.

During the Reformation period, a high level of humanistic education existed here. Around 1523 a remarkable icon was painted in the Wallachian Curtea de Arges Monastery. The icon shows Mary holding her dead son—realistically portrayed—stretched out in her arms, reminiscent of the "Christ in the Tomb" painted by Hans Holbein the Younger in 1521–1522. John stands behind her as Mary Magdalene moistens the feet of the dead Christ with her tears. At the side, Princess Despina holds her dead son in her arms and looks with deep mourning toward Mary. More than perhaps any other, this icon reflects the spirit of humanism, which "sees what is."

Madonna and Child Enthroned, Romanian, first half of the eighteenth century.
This large (80cm x 50cm) icon from Saint Elias Church in Cîmpulung shows the face of Mary painted in traditional fashion. However, the draping of her red *maphorion* and the rich curved decorations of the throne show the Western Baroque influence.

Christ the Vine, glass icon, Transylvania, eighteenth century.
On this traditionally executed Romanian glass icon, Christ is rendered quite realistically as a vine from whose branches grapes grow, in accord with the biblical reference John 15:5 ("I am the vine, you are the branches.") The earliest example of this vine-symbolism can be found on a chalice crafted in Antioch around 500.

Romania gained its independence in 1878, as a result of nineteenth-century anti-Turkish liberation movements. In the coexistence of their religious confessions, as in other areas, the Romanians project a different image from that of the other Balkan peoples. Besides the German Protestants who had settled there, there was an old tradition of Orthodoxy, which, however, met with considerable competition from Romanian nationalist piety as well as from the Roman Catholicism promoted by the Habsburgs.

A distinguishing mark of Romanian icon painting is its diverse regional schools such as those of Transylvania, Moldavia-Bessarabia, and Wallachia. The best known icons are icons painted in reverse on the back of a piece of glass, an artistic technique which was originally imported from southern Germany, but which became integral to Romanian art from the end of the eighteenth century. Since these glass icons developed primarily in those regions united with the Roman Church, it is not surprising that they reveal a mixture of Orthodox and Roman Catholic themes.

Right: The Resurrected Lord Meets the Apostle Thomas, a Venetian master, painting on Athos, around 1366–1371.
On the left panel of this diptych, on a rounded gold background, we see Christ bending graciously over his disciple so that the latter can be convinced beyond doubt that his Lord and Master has truly risen.

Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer, already known to us as a devotee of Byzantine culture and life style (see page 35), has described his own conception of Athos thus:

"The Holy Mountain with its primeval forest, with its deeply rooted and rigid ecclesiastical establishment, is the center and heart of the East Roman religion, the Vatican of the East as it were, goal of all longing, repository of the wealth of ecclesiastical tradition, free port and ultimate refuge for all the world-weary of Byzantium; indeed, it is the only fragment of the Orthodox monarchy never desecrated by barbarian footprints."

Mount Athos is the farthest east of the three long fingers of the Chalcidice Peninsula stretching into the Aegean Sea. Even in antiquity its isolation made it both feared and mysteriously attractive, and from the ninth century it became a destination for the Byzantine world-weary, from simple folk to famous emperors. In 1046, the designation Holy Mountain became official. In time, all the Orthodox nations established monastic communities here. The interior decoration of the churches drew master painters from all over the Byzantine Empire, including, at a later date, the independent Slavic states. Thessalonika assumed an important intermediary role in these endeavors. From here came the monk, Roman, who painted the marvelous Chin of Hilandar around 1360. (A chin is the deësis tier of an iconostasis.) The monks of Athos themselves did not so much regard the Holy Mountain primarily as a melting pot, but as a last vestige of the Empire, a caretaker of Byzantine book illumination, wall painting, and icon painting.

The sovereignty of Athos as a monastic republic was, in general, respected by the Turks, and numerous artists came there from Greece and from the Greek islands, especially Crete. Artists also came from the Venetian Empire, which regarded itself as the legitimate successor to the Empire of the Romans. Up to and including the present, artists from all over the world, not just from Orthodox countries, come to the Holy Mountain to learn the sacred craft of icon painting.

From Left to Right:
Saint Luke the Evangelist, Hilandar Monastery, fourteenth century.
Saints Sergius and Bacchus, Hilandar Monastery, fourteenth century.
Saint Matthew the Evangelist, Hilandar Monastery, fourteenth century.

Left: Five Holy Martyrs, Greek painter working at Hilandar Monastery, second half of the fourteenth century.
These martyrs portrayed in full frontal stance are the saints Mardarius, Eugenius, Eustathius, Auxentius and Orestius.

Below left: Tricheirusa Mother of God, Hilandar Monastery, fourteenth century.
This Tricheirusa type of the Hodegetria Mother of God icon is found in the Hilandar Monastery. The icon is richly overlaid with silver. It is said that when the hand of Saint John of Damascus was severed, he brought it with him and prayed before this image, whereupon his hand was restored. In gratitude for this a silver hand was added to the icon, making it "three-handed," in Greek, *tricheirusa*.

Above: Hodegetria Mother of God, mosaic icon, twelfth century.

Anastasis, Michael Damascene (?), sixteenth century.
Even during the Palaeologus period there were figures with sweeping gestures that betrayed inner agitation, as in the fresco of Christ's descent into hell in the Chora Church in Constantinople. About two hundred years later Michael Damascene painted his icon of the Resurrection *(Anastasis)* of Christ in the spirit of this tradition. Standing on the broken gates of the underworld, Christ, in an elliptical *mandorla*, bends down to Adam and with a strong hand pulls him out of the grave. Eve, with hands covered, prays for redemption for herself and those standing behind her. On the other side, John the Baptist heads a group of Old Testament kings and ancestors. Above both groups, in triangular formations embedded in the rocky landscape, are small figures with halos and scrolls, probably prophets predicting deliverance from death.

The culture of Cyprus and Crete and of the Greek islands in general has roots reaching far back into the legends of human history. Even in early antiquity it formed the bridge on which the peoples of Greece and those of the East met in commercial exchange, blending into a fascinating cultural identity known as Aegean civilization.

On Cyprus, copper, in Greek *kypros*, along with the widely known cult of the goddess of love, Aphrodite, attracted traders as well as travelers; in Crete, it was another female cultic figure. The fervor with which these goddesses were revered would be fought later by an equally fervent devotion to Mary. Interestingly, this fascination manifested itself once more when the classical era of icon painting, overwhelmingly Byzantine in character, was at an end. Here at the juncture of East and West this distinctive style found a new language, a kind of Esperanto of Mediterranean common culture.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Crete was ruled by the Republic of Venice. In the fifteenth century a school developed, affiliated with painters' guilds. Over a hundred artists from the second half of the century are known to us by name from the archives. These artists had a quite diverse clientele; they worked for Eastern monasteries as well as for Western cathedrals, and they were marvelously adept at fulfilling diverse expectations regarding subjects and techniques. Thus artists emerged out of the earlier unquestioned anonymity of sacred art. A George Klotzas or a Michael Damascene created a visual world directly connected with contemporary society. John Apakas, for example, in painting "the Descent from the Cross,"[11] chose to show a city in the background with many recognizable details rather than the abstract backdrops typical of earlier painters.

11 Painted in 1600 at Heraklion, Crete.

Far Left: Saint Nicholas, Italo-Cretan, eighteenth century.
Christ and Mary, who appeared to Saint Nicholas in a dream, hover in the clouds of heaven above the saint, who is shown with a Gospel book in a gesture of benediction.

Left: Mother of God of the Passion, Cretan, sixteenth century.
This variation of the popular Arakiotina Mother of God, depicted with angels bearing the instruments of the Crucifixion, originated in Crete and was widely circulated in the West.

Above: Saint Ignatius the God-bearer, Cyprus, late eighteenth century.
Around 110, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch in Syria, was taken as a prisoner to Rome where he was martyred. In his famous letters he refers to himself as *theophoros*, "God-bearer."

Left: Lady of the Angels Mother of God, Crete, 1602.
Mary enthroned and the Child Jesus as Pantocrator are both facing forward. On the footstool of the throne is a dedication giving the date.

THE BORDER KINGDOMS
(Adriatic Coast, Italian Madonnieri, Ukraine, and Galicia)

Above: Hodegetria, madonnieri, seventeenth century.
The face of Mary on this Hodegetria variation is painted in Western Madonna-like style, in a manner that is more lifelike than earlier prototypes, yet without sacrificing religious intensity.

Left: The Dormition of the Mother of God with Saints, Italian, fifteenth century.
In this horizontal icon, Saints Dominic and Francis appear in the *maniera italiana* as if painted on the panels of a nonexistent triptych. The recessed main scene, on the other hand, corresponds to Byzantine tradition.

Page 67 left: The Nativity of Christ, Wooden Church at Prikra, mid-eighteenth century.
Idyllic rural Nativity scene with shepherds in the festive garb of the Carpathian Mountains.

Page 67 below right: The Baptism of Christ, Galicia, seventeenth century.
Jesus stands above waters rippling in a narrow gorge. The oversized figure of John the Baptist, emphasizing his saintliness, is balanced on the other side by three angels. The delicate coloring of this icon matches the graceful intimacy of the scene.

Like a wily predator in its lair, Venice, hidden in its swampy lagoons, built on the Adriatic an empire whose culture has proven unfailingly fascinating. Because it prudently remained loyal to Byzantium during the invasions of the Franks in the ninth century, it was able to continue on as a partner, and after 1204 could, more or less cynically, present itself as the legitimate successor of the great Empire on the Bosporus.

It was not plundering the art of vanquished states (historically the victor's prerogative) that was Venice's great achievement, but rather the discriminating assimilation of this foreign art (including icon painting), synthesizing it into a distinctive style. It is not clear whether or not we can speak of a particular Venetian School. In any case, within its imperial borders appeared a fascinating abundance of expressive possibilities and stylistic resources, which can be systematized only with great difficulty by concepts like *maniera greca* or *maniera bizantina*.

The most significant turning point in this epoch, which started in the sixteenth century and affected not only Venice but practically the entire Mediterranean area, was the gradual replacement of the Eastern Church's title for Mary, God Bearer *(theotokos)* or Mother of God *(mater theou)*, with the designation Madonna. The Madonna painters or *madonnieri* painted a new type of Marian image. In a very general way, it is distinguished from the traditional Byzantine type by its sweetness, which is by no means to be understood as sentimental. Mary is no longer emphasized as Mother of God, but as Mother of the Son of Man. A new type of panel painting, which influenced icons of the most diverse origins, developed in independent schools of masters in Siena, Umbria, Florence and other Italian cities.

In addition to Ukraine, Galicia was another border kingdom in which a dialogue unfolded between the Roman Catholic meditative picture and the Orthodox icon. Anyone who has ever visited the cities and villages of southern Poland or the isolated wooded valleys of Carpathian Ukraine and become immersed in a study of both the cruelty and the greatness of its history will be aware of the extraordinarily difficult task of classifying the art of its icons. In doing so, Church loyalties of the border areas of the Occident are an important factor. Here, where there were political and cultural rivalries between the Orthodox kingdom of the Great Princes of Moscow and the Roman Catholic Polish-Lithuanian kings, the ground was ready for accommodation between the Church of the Pope in Rome and that of Orthodox bishops. This came to pass for Ukraine through the Act of Union *(Unia)* at Brest-Litovsk in 1596 and in 1646 for the Carpatho-Russians at Uzhorod.

These events stimulated the development of a Uniate style of icon painting alongside that of a more strictly Orthodox ambiance, a development that had positive as well as negative aspects. The icon artists found themselves confronted with the stimulating task of transcending the divi-

Right: The Crucifixion of Christ, Wooden Church at Matysová, 1640.
There is a great deal of tension created here between the abstract, non-realistic portrayal of the *corpus* and the expressionistic gesture of the lamenting women, pointing with large hands to the Crucified. This, in combination with the grief of the weeping John, gives this unusual Crucifixion scene a mystical depth.

sion that the Western Church had allowed to develop regarding the veneration of sacred images. The museums of Kraków, Sanok, Lublin, and other cities, with their large collections, give a general idea of the rich variety of this icon art. This artistic diversity arose from the confessional, political, and social conditions, which often varied from valley to valley, from village to village or from city to city. The macro-geography of icon painting, with its classical centers stretching over vast territories, gave way here to a micro-geography of local diversity.

THE CHRISTIAN EAST
(Georgia, Armenia, the Egyptian Copts, and Ethiopia)

The craft of metal repoussé, which flourished in Georgia even before the turn of the millennium, led in the High Middle Ages to the practice of covering icons more or less completely with *oklads*, leaving openings only for the painted faces. Finally, painting was abandoned altogether, and icons were fabricated entirely out of metal (silver, gold, or copper), which was decorated with repoussé, embossed, and sometimes adorned with gems.

Right: Christ, the Man of Sorrows, silverplate, Georgian, sixteenth century.
The metal icon of the Man of Sorrows standing upright in a sarcophagus—a type originating in the West—witnesses to the high artistic quality of Georgian repoussé.

Left: Mother of God Enthroned, repoussé, Georgian, sixteenth century.
Following Byzantine models, Mary, encircled by angels, holds the Child Jesus in her arms. Seen through the double arches, Mary's throne gives the appearance of being set in a niche, investing the Mother of God with a grandeur and a sense of distance that commands reverence.

From the first ancient legends to the present day, Georgia has been surrounded by powerful kingdoms which plundered it time and time again. Christianity came to Georgia about 330, through a woman prisoner of war named Nina. It brought the people a period of independence, especially from the great Persian Empire. A fresco from the year 1096 shows the national namesake and patron, Saint George, slaying the Persian king with his spear. Georgian saints are portrayed with the unmistakable features of the inhabitants. The large almond-shaped eyes of the Mother of God are the same eyes we meet in women's faces on the streets and in the markets of Georgia. The slender figures of both sexes, majestic even in their humility, are reminiscent of the dancers in the Georgian National Ballet. The earliest icons from the ninth century demonstrate a consummate mastery of the encaustic technique (page 238). Icon coverings and ivory carvings from the same period reveal a high level of skill. There are repoussé icons preserved from as early as the seventh century, masterpieces of Georgian artistic craft.

From antiquity to modern times Armenia, like Georgia and the rest of the Caucasus, was used as a transit route by foreign rulers and their armies. Even now it appears truly amazing that the Armenian people were able to develop an art of high quality during their relatively few years of peace.

Left: Saint George, cloisonné, Georgian, fifteenth century.
As usual, George is depicted as warring against evil. Above at the right, the hand of God appears to bless George, the national patron of Georgia. As with inlay work, the scales of the dragon-monster are decoratively done in cloisonné.

Above: Saint George, illustration in an Ethiopian manuscript, seventeenth century.
The saint, who saves the princess at the right from the dragon, is depicted here with wings, huge dark eyes, and dark skin. All the figures are clearly set off from each other through the use of color, and are geometrically stylized, as if this were the pattern for a carpet or a weaving.

The Armenians were very wary of the Byzantine veneration of images. In particular, Armenian theologians rejected the notion that icons are a medium of direct, or sacramental, representation. So this people often avoided using their artistic gifts in the illumination of sacred texts such as the Bible, liturgy books, and patristic writings, and even of manuscripts whose illuminations approached the icon in religious significance.

We know very little about the beginnings of Christianity in Egypt. Even so, Jews from Egypt were among those who witnessed the events of Pentecost,[12] and one fervent disciple of Christ seems to have come from Alexandria.[13] Aside from the legendary accounts of the establishment of churches in Egypt by the apostles, it is the Church of Alexandria that suddenly appears in the spotlight of history at the end of the second century. Situated at the doorstep of the African continent, Alexandria had commercial and cultural connections as far away as India, and in this period of Hellenism it was the cultural and creative center of the oikumene, the entire inhabited world.

The early encaustic icons in Egypt stem from the Hellenistic era; even at this time, however, the art known as Coptic had also begun. Coptic is a corruption of the Greek word *Aigyptios* in conjunction with the Arabic word *kipt*, a term referring to the peasant *fellahs* of the Nile Valley. This language

12 Acts 2:10.
13 Acts 18:24 f.

mix was a result of the Arab conquests in the seventh century and the pervasive Islamization of Egypt and the Near East. The Coptic Church, which had separated from the Byzantine Mother Church during the fifth-century controversies about the person of Christ, was able to maintain a certain independence under Arab rule. The same is true of its icon painters, who changed over from encaustic to tempera in the seventh and eighth centuries.

At first Coptic icon painting was a purely monastic art. The best-known example is the painting of Saint Menas, on whose shoulder Christ places his hand, presenting him to the people as the abbot of the Apollon Monastery in Bawit.

The evangelization of Ethiopia[14] is well documented in reliable written sources. Monuments from this early time have not survived, because so much was destroyed in seventh-century Arab attacks. They were undoubtedly influenced, however, not only by Byzantium, but also and especially by the Syro-Palestinian cultures, including the peoples of the Caucasus. The magnificent murals on the walls of remarkable churches hewn out of living rock, whose construction reached its peak in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, suggest a previous tradition of panel painting, complemented by book illumination of an equally high quality.

The earliest extant Ethiopian icons date only from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In viewing them we do well not to forget that Ethiopia is the gate between Mediterranean and African cultures. Holy persons are rendered in a poster-like fashion, that is, without shadow, and always frontally; always looking evil squarely in the face. The large eyes in the faces are a particularly striking feature, one which is less in evidence in other Eastern icons. In combination with their fixed "frontality," these wide eyes produce an immediate effect on the viewer or person praying.

14 From the Greek word, *Aithiopes*, literally "burnt faces."

Above: Mother of God with Child, Coptic, nineteenth century.
The entire square of this icon is filled with the half-figure of Mary, with the Child Jesus looking up at her. Behind the Mother of God we see two angels. All the forms and colors of this Coptic icon are clear-cut and simple without seeming naive.

Left: Triptych of the Mother of God with Child, Coptic, nineteenth century.
The rounded heads with the dark eyes are typically Coptic stylistic elements. On the left panel above we can see the Risen Lord carrying a banner of victory, and below him Saint George as dragon-killer. On the right panel is the Crucified Lord with the grief-stricken Mary, and a soldier piercing his side; below is the thorn-crowned Christ displaying the wounds on his hands.

Page 71: Abbot Abraham, Coptic, encaustic, sixth century.
The elongated face of this ascetic abbot with the huge eyes is quite striking. The ethereal, detached quality of the head suggests the depth of the saint's spirituality.

Left: Mother of God of the Burning Bush with Three Saints, French artist working on Mount Sinai, thirteenth century.
Mary is surrounded by Old Testament figures, Moses at the left, Elijah at the right. She holds the Child Jesus, who appears to hover before her in a sitting position. At the right edge of the picture the slender figure of Saint Nicholas is included. All four figures are shown, not withdrawn from the world in meditation, but rather animated with tender emotion, in the style preferred by Western artists.

Right: Mother of God of the Burning Bush with Two Saints, Venetian artist working on Mount Sinai, third quarter of the fourteenth century.
Mary is presented frontally with the Child, who seems to hover in front of her, with John the Baptist at the left and Moses at the right turning toward her. In contrast to the version of the French artist of the Mother of God with Three Saints, the background is without ornamentation, allowing the three figures of this picture to stand out even more clearly.

After the schism of 1054, the Latin West regarded the Byzantines and later the Greeks as schismatics, hence leading the renegades back to Mother Church was considered a pious deed, one that had the power to take away all sins. Amid unimaginable atrocities, the subjugation of Byzantine territories proceeded along the ancient Via Egnatia, eventually culminating in 1204 in the conquest of Constantinople in the name of the Cross. Even without a detailed description of the conquest, it is clear that every chance for a synthesis between the devotional image of the West and the icon of the East had been destroyed.

The situation was quite different in the East. Despite all the struggles, a kind of chivalrous style of negotiation had developed here between Byzantines and Moslems, a style that influenced the daily lives of both. Byzantines as well as Moslems reacted to the boisterous and rowdy Western barons with cool reserve, even with disgust. In contrast to their behavior in the Balkans and in Asia Minor, however, these barons learned relatively quickly the fine art of dealing with an enemy as an opponent; otherwise they would never have been able to stay in the Holy Land.

At the same time, this was the matrix out of which the Crusader icons emerged, a mixture of Latin and Byzantine sacred art. Artists from practically all European peoples produced such icons. With bold ardor, this crossover painting transcended the traditional stylistic elements of the various Byzantine renaissances. Byzantine aloofness is superseded by the power of a directly appealing facial expression. Through masterful treatment of the "face mask," each face appears as an individual.

Left: Saint Paul the Apostle, Italian artist working on Mount Sinai, third quarter of the thirteenth century.
The Apostle to the Gentiles is shown here as an intellectually powerful preacher of the Gospel, whose attentive eyes and high forehead radiate intelligence and wisdom.

Below: Saint Sergius, Italian artist working on Mount Sinai, thirteenth century.
This icon is most probably a votive image. At the feet of the saint we see a reverent female figure, probably the person who commissioned this painting. As was typical for the crusaders, Saint Sergius sits in a knight's armor on his warhorse, holding high a fluttering banner whose colors are repeated on the quiver at his side.

In contrast to the devastating catastrophes of war, with the corresponding cultural "repudiations" which the peoples of the Near and Far East had to endure, development in Russia progressed with relative continuity despite the Mongol invasion, rule by the Tartars, and constant feuding among the princes. An essential prerequisite for this state of affairs was the Baptism of Russia, the acceptance in 988 of Byzantine-rite Christianity by Vladimir (d. 1015), Grand Duke of Kiev, who was therefore honored with the title "Equal to the Apostles." This new church sought the legitimization of older, apostolic roots, even though they were perhaps only legendary. The *Primary Chronicle* tells about the visit of the Apostle Andrew, who from the heights of the banks of the Dnieper predicted the glorious future of the city of Kiev and of Christianity. The *Chronicle* continues to describe how the Apostle then went on through Novgorod to the Varangians; thus, not only is the world view of Eastern Europe in the early Middle Ages outlined, but one of the routes along which icons made their way from Constantinople-Byzantium to Russia is traced.

The newly baptized Grand Duke is exhorted, among other things, to venerate icons. Though we do find iconlike book illuminations from this period, it is unlikely that icons had reached Kievan Rus at this time along with the Byzantine liturgy. In their stead, mosaic and fresco paintings appeared on the walls and vaulted ceilings of the new and magnificent cathedrals in Kiev, Novgorod, and soon thereafter also in central Russia. Depictions of the saints and the events of salvation in the Bible, along with visual representations of liturgical hymns, were the visual aids for missionary preaching. The reception and transformation of the Byzantine aesthetic depended upon the gradual replacement of Byzantine bishops with Russian ecclesiastics, who more and more encouraged regional traditions. Only within the unfolding of this development could what we call the Russian icon emerge with its own religious and aesthetic mystique.

Page 74: Saint John the Evangelist with his Disciple Prochoros, Vita icon, Russian, eighteenth century.
According to church tradition, the Evangelist John was identical to the beloved disciple at the Last Supper, who was the sole apostle to follow Jesus all the way to the cross. In the apocryphal *Acts of John* there are many legends surrounding his life, some of which are depicted on this biographical icon. The picture in the middle shows John on Patmos, listening to a voice from above and dictating what he hears to his disciple Prochoros.

1. Prochoros sits mourning on the shore, because he fears that his master has died in a shipwreck. John is, however, washed ashore alive.
2. John raises from the dead a boy whom Satan had drowned while swimming.

1	2	3	4
5			7
6			8
9	10	11	12

3. During the feast of the goddess Artemis, John preaches against idolatry and is threatened with stoning.
4. John is led to the Tribunal of the Emperor.
5. Bound, John is lowered into boiling oil, but survives this torture.
6. While imprisoned, John preaches to the other prisoners.
7. John is banished to Patmos. During the passage to the island a young man is thrown overboard.
8. John rescues the young man who was thrown overboard.
9. The captives are led to prison; John preaches Christ, the Righteous Judge, to the people.
10. John raises a dead person, whom Satan already has in his claws.
11. John follows a person fleeing to the desert in order to lead him on the right way.
12. Nearing death, John takes leave of his disciples, who in accordance with his wish have already dug his grave.

Even though the old Russian chronicles report that individual icons were produced immediately after the Baptism of Rus around 988, it is highly unlikely. In fact, it was large-scale iconography, such as that which can still be seen today in the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom in Kiev, which represented the sacred image at first; these paintings were, for liturgical purposes, just as much *eikons*, the outward-material copies of inner and spiritual sacred prototypes. Gradually, however, icons were imported from the Byzantine Empire, and, just as gradually, indigenous workshops were established. In addition to the monastic studios, we know that secular artists also owned their own workshops. Despite floods of migration and internal struggles between princes, a few examples of iconography have survived from this early time, among them the icon of the Mother of God with Child with Anthony and Theodosius. Painted around 1300, it is also called the Mother of God of the Monastery of the Caves, because she was the patroness of the monastery these two monks founded, an establishment with rooms both above and below ground. There is considerable controversy about when various other artistic works were created and whether they come from Kiev or Vladimir-Suzdal, since Kiev, the "mother of Russian cities," was conquered and razed by the Mongols on December 6, 1240. The Mongols also destroyed the cultural life of the city, which only awakened to new life centuries later.

Above: Mosaic with Church Fathers, Kiev, eleventh century.
In general, the primary teachers of the faith in the early church were called Church Fathers, who were themselves, as a rule, bishops, and, not infrequently, significant theologians. The Greek Fathers here depicted in episcopal garb, carrying the Gospel book, their hands raised in blessing, are: in the center, Saint John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 407); at his left, Basil the Great, Metropolitan of Caesarea (d. 379); at his right, Gregory of Nazianzus, for a time Bishop of Constantinople (d. c. 390). All three of these prelates are of tremendous significance for the Eastern liturgy, and, therefore, are often depicted together. In addition, at the far right, we see Gregory Thaumaturgus (the Wonder-Worker, died c. 270) and, at the far left, Saint Lawrence, the Deacon.

Top right: The Mother of God Svenskaya with the Holy Monks Anthony and Theodosius, Ukrainian, eighteenth century.
Crowned as Queen of Heaven, Mary sits on a wide throne of peasantlike design, with the child Jesus hovering, as it were, in front of her. She has placed her hands in a protective gesture on the shoulders of the monks who are bowed in veneration. At the left, Saint Anthony, founding father of monasticism in Rus; at the right, Saint Theodosius, Abbot of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev who introduced cenobitic-style monasticism to Rus.

Above: Saints Boris and Gleb, Russian, fourteenth century.
After the death of Vladimir I, Svyatopolk had his brothers Boris and Gleb murdered. They were subsequently venerated as martyrs. As in this icon, these two saintly brothers, who enjoyed great popularity among the people, are usually shown wearing the fur-trimmed garments of the sons of a prince.

Tired of the constant internecine feuds of the princes, Grand Duke Andrei[15] left Kiev and established a new kingdom in the vast central Russian forests, which later became the Grand Duchy of Moscow. In addition to his new capital, Vladimir, on the Klyasma River, Andrei also built a magnificent residence which was clearly influenced by the Western Romanesque style. He called it "Bogolyubovo" (Russian for "beloved of God"), and he called himself Andrei Bogolyubsky. In 1165, he built a gem of old Russian architecture, the church of the Protection of the Mother of God on the Nerl, which is a small river close to Bogolyubovo, a location which was also an important juncture for Russian foreign trade. Prince Andrei, in his vain endeavor to establish Vladimir as a metropolitan see of the Russian Church, created for this purpose both the feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (or *Pokrov*) and the icon that depicts it (see page 177 f.). Thus, a center of religious art with its own profile developed in the Vladimir-Suzdal region and in the Principality of Tver. Its solemn style of representation corresponds quite clearly to the theocratic conception of self as the "Beloved of God."

The Principality of Tver, situated on the upper Volga, was established out of the old duchies of Vladimir-Suzdal and Novgorod and was the principle opponent of Moscow at the *Zemsky Sobor* or Assembly of the Land.[16] In a merciless series of intrigues, above all in an alliance with the troops of

Left: The Mother of God Pokrov and Saint Romanus the Melodist, Russian, eighteenth century.
On the upper half of the icon, we see the Mother of God surrounded by saints. She holds her protective veil over the entire fellowship. On the lower half of the icon, we see Andrew, the Fool for Christ, pointing to this apparition. The second story concerns Romanus, a church chanter who had an unpleasant voice and was to audition his hymns at court. Mary appeared to him in a dream and gave him a sheet of music to eat. After ingesting it, he sang so beautifully on Christmas Day that all who heard him were very moved.

15 Murdered in 1174.
16 Editor's Note: The *Zemsky Sobor* was to Russia what the Estates General were to Western Europe.

Above: The Holy Trinity, Vladimir-Suzdal School, fourteenth century.
Quite early the Old Testament scene of the Hospitality of Abraham became a symbol of the Holy Trinity. We see three angels sitting at a set table. Their hosts, Abraham and Sarah, are depicted as smaller than the guests, although they are in the foreground. Through this reversed perspective, the lofty status of the heavenly guests is documented.

John the Forerunner, Yaroslavl, seventeenth or eighteenth century.
The basis of this depiction is the quote from Isaiah at the beginning of the Gospel according to Mark, "See, I am sending my messenger (Greek *angelos*) ahead of you." The pictorial theme of John the Forerunner, or Baptist, with mighty angelic wings, originated in the thirteenth century and enjoyed great popularity in Moscow and central Asia. The biographical sketches here are not arranged around the central figure, but are presented in small stage-like houses at the feet of the saint. In his left hand John holds the eucharistic chalice, with his right hand he points to the Lamb of God in it, and with the words on the scroll he preaches repentance and conversion.

The Mother of God of Tolga, Yaroslavl School, fourteenth century.
The boy Jesus standing on Mary's knee reaches upward to embrace and cuddle his mother, a small, new and quite touching Eleusa-type variation. The openings in the back of the throne and the decorative, flowing folds of the maphorion of the Mother of God bestow upon this icon both resilience and elegance.

the Mongol (Tartar) occupation, Moscow finally won the upper hand.

The Golden Horde then elevated Moscow to the status of Grand Duchy, and Moscow swallowed up Tver in 1484. Tver considered Moscow to be an upstart backwoods fortress,[17] whereas they thought of themselves not only as the successor of Vladimir-Suzdal, but even more importantly, and primarily, as successor of the Grand Duchy of Kiev. The flowering of Tverian icon painting occurred in the fourteenth century. At this time, a bishop of Tver preached and wrote that "paradise is spiritual, an internal human reality," which corresponds precisely with the spirituality of Tverian icons. A century later they constituted the primary paradigm for the art of Andrei Rublev.

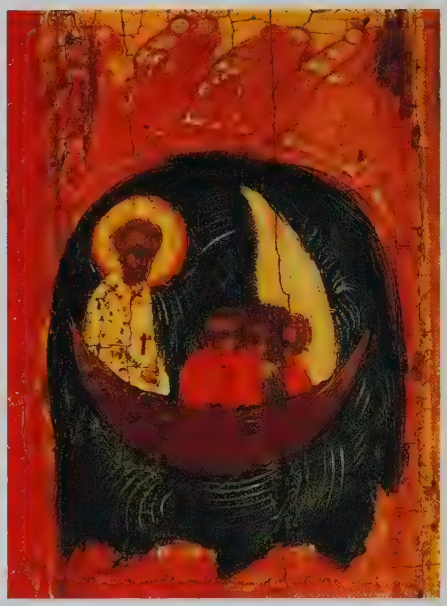
In 1024, the Grand Duke of Kiev, Yaroslav the Wise, founded Yaroslavl, a city named for himself, on the upper Volga. It was soon to become the hub of a vital central Russian principality that had its own indigenous culture. Icon painting reached its zenith here in the second half of the seventeenth century, when its primary patrons and sponsors were the wealthy merchant class and the nobility.

17 The Russian word is *Kremlin.*

Left: Christ Not Made by Hands, School of Yaroslavl, end of the seventeenth century.
According to a legend as far back as the sixth century, Jesus dried his face and miraculously left his image on a piece of cloth (or *mandylion*), which became known as the icon Not Made by Hands (Greek *acheiropoietos*). This legend led to the depiction called the Mandylion, which was venerated as miraculous. The head of Christ seems to float as if suspended, and his eyes look directly at the person meditating.

Above: Bishop Arseny and Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich, Tver, end of the seventeenth century.
Both saints raise their eyes to the clouds where the scene of the Transfiguration takes place. In the background, we see between them the towers of the Tver Kremlin, which had been rebuilt in the seventeenth century, and the Cathedral of the Dormition of Mary.

Left: Saint Savaty of Tver, Orsa, middle of the sixteenth century.
Saint Savaty was the founder of the Monastery of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on the Orsa River near Tver. Dressed as a monk, he kneels in a rocky landscape enlivened with palm trees. In the center of the picture, we see the large wooden cross that Savaty brought with him on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.



Right: Saint Nicholas as Helper in Distress at Sea, northern Russian, sixteenth century.
On individual icons as well as in the detail scenes on biographical icons, Saint Nicholas is proudly presented as the protector of mariners, guiding their boats on a stormy sea safely into harbor.

Above: Detail of an Anastasis Icon, Pskov, fifteenth century.
On a strip above the depiction of Christ's Descent into Hell, we see a deësis group, in the center of which is Saint Nicholas, not Christ. This depiction of Nicholas as vicar of Christ witnesses to his popularity and the tremendous trust that the faithful had in his miraculous powers.

Right: Saint George, Novgorod, sixteenth century.
Normally the saint is portrayed as a dragon-slayer mounted on a horse; here he is shown as petitioner in the deësis group with the stature of a major martyr.

Novgorod and its "younger brother" Pskov belong to that borderland between the Latin West and the Orthodox East, which, as we have already seen, was geographically the place where various cultures met. It is difficult to describe the history of Novgorod[18] briefly, with its legends surrounding the person of the Varangian prince, Rurik, founder of a dynasty that lasted until Ivan the Terrible, but the city and its culture were not only very independent but also very strong-willed. Two old sayings accurately sum up this attitude, "One does not fight against God and Novgorod" and "Wherever Saint Sophia's is, there is Novgorod." Saint Sophia, the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom,[19] was built in 989 as a wooden church and then, after it burned down, was rebuilt between 1045 and 1052 as an imposing stone structure. Around this central edifice numerous churches were erected, among others Saint Nicholas Cathedral, built by the Prince about 70 years after Saint Sophia Cathedral (which had, in the intervening years, become a symbol of republican sentiments).[20] Also the Church of Saint Frydach[21] and the Church of John the Forerunner, in which the disputes between the merchants of Novgorod and their foreign "guests" were settled. The Novgorodians, true to form, kept not only their prince but also their archbishop loosely in check.

In 1240 Alexander, Grand Duke of Vladimir and Prince of Novgorod, defeated the armies of Sweden and the Baltic Order of the Brothers of the Sword (the Teutonic Knights) at the Neva River, earning the title "Nevsky," and defeated a Swedish army again in 1242 near Pskov in a battle fought on the frozen surface of Lake Peipus. The power and influence of this unique city-state and republic diminished as Moscow grew stronger; finally it was destroyed by Ivan the Terrible in 1570. Within this historical and intellectual matrix, a school of icon painting emerged.

This school of painting was as lucid and unambiguous in composition and coloring as the business ledgers of the merchants who commissioned the works.

In the Middle Ages, Pskov, the younger brother of Novgorod, was closer to the border of the Catholic West than the city

Portable Iconostasis, Pskov, third quarter of the sixteenth century.
From the middle of the fifteenth century, iconostases were painted in a small format. The example illustrated is only 64cm x 98cm. These were not used to enclose altars, but rather as private meditative aids that could be taken along on trips. This one displays a seven-part feast day sequence at the top. The second and most important row is characterized by the fact that it is larger and contains a deësis group; next to Christ enthroned are Mary and John the Forerunner, as well as archangels and apostles. The third row presents seven separate themes: a group of soldiers and princes (first two panels on the left), groups of sainted physicians and martyrs (first two panels on the right), and, in the middle, Christ's Descent into Hell, bishops and metropolitans, as well as the Hospitality of Abraham. On the bottom row we can see twenty-six saints, primarily ascetics, monks, hermits, and popular regional saints.

on the Volkhov. The icons of Pskov are immediately recognizable by the somber atmosphere, which also appears in the tenebrous faces. The reason for this can be found in a particular mineral (sulfuric arsenic) that was mixed with the paints. Considering the geographical location of the city and its trade with the West, it is not surprising that within its walls the icons of Saint Nicholas in particular were cherished. On a three-figure painting (deësis), "Nikola-Mikola" appears between the Mother of God and John the Forerunner in the place of Christ. Other icons give us indirect information about the struggle between Christianity and indigenous heathen practices.

The power and influence of Novgorod extended throughout an empire that reached to the White Sea and the Ural Mountains. Within its borders, myriad artistic workshops sprang up, some of which continued producing up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Their main characteristics are the peasant ambiance and, not infrequently, the influence of the native Finnish population on the features of the faces of holy persons. The museums in Petrozavodsk and in the glorious wooden cathedrals on the island of Kizhi in Lake Onega with their various collections impart a lasting impression of this truly indigenous art. Even after the Novgorod *imperium* came under the domination of Moscow, the true Lords were in cities like Vologda, Veliki, Ustyug, Solvychegodsk, and Kargopol, to name but a few, and the cosmopolitan tastes of their merchants are quite evident in the works they commissioned.

18 "New City" in Russian; the merchants of the other Hanseatic League cities called it Naugarten.

19 That is, the wisdom of God, and at the same time the God-given wisdom of the sovereign.

20 Editor's Note: Novgorod had been a merchant republic like other members of the Hanseatic League before calling in a prince to lead the people against the invasions of the Swedes and the Teutonic Knights, and did not lose this memory or longing until Novgorod was absorbed into the Muscovite autocracy by Ivan the Terrible.

21 Actually, this was the Church of Paraskeva-Pyatnika, the patroness of trade, which took place in particular on market and exchange day, Friday. Editor's Note: There is a pun here, for Frydach, Pyatnika and Paraskeva are all forms of the word "Friday" in German, Russian and Greek respectively.

Icon Ensemble with Anastasis and the Root of Jesse, Vologda, fifteenth century.
The portrayal of Christ's Descent into Hell in the center of the large icon at the right is encircled by a double wreath of images. These depict the life of Christ in fifty-two separate scenes. They begin with the solemn decision of the threefold God to become human in Jesus the Logos, and they end with the Dormition of the Mother of God.
On the large icon at the left (below) the genealogy of Jesus, the root of Jesse, is prominently displayed. The nine separate panels depict (from above, left to right) Sophia, the Wisdom of God; Christ's Descent into Hell; the Mother of God of the Burning Bush; Mary's Entrance into the Temple; the Synaxis of the Mother of God; the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (Pokrov); celebration of the icon of the Vladimir Mother of God; All Saints (?); and Saint John on Patmos (Revelation).

Above: The Mother of God Hodegetria, Dionysius, 1482.
Observe the rounded silhouette of mother and child; the hand gently gesturing to the future Savior; the dark red maphorion with the ochre trimming, which encircles like a frame the face of the Mother of God, shading her eyes; and the contrast between the darker garb of Mary and the lighter colored robe of the boy Jesus. This simplicity and clarity of depiction show Dionysius to be a master who, even after Rublev, could express inner peace and deep faith with new emphasis.

Page 85, below: Saint Cyril of Beloozero, School of Dionysius, early sixteenth century.
The founder of the church and monastery at Lake Siverski (Beloozero) was painted by a gifted disciple of Dionysius in the style of the master, with an elongated body and relatively small head. The frontal depiction of the saint with raised hand in blessing and an unrolled scroll also conforms to Byzantine tradition. Cyril holds a scroll with the message, "Do not grieve, brothers and children, on the day of my rest; I entrust you to God and his immaculate Mother."

At the climax of the brutal domination of the Tartars, as the Mongolian and Turkish peoples merged under Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century came to be called, Russian icon painting reached its apex. Although Moscow's Grand Duke Dmitri defeated the Tartars for the first time in 1380 at the Field of Snipes *(kulikovo pole)* on the Don River, their power was not crushed.

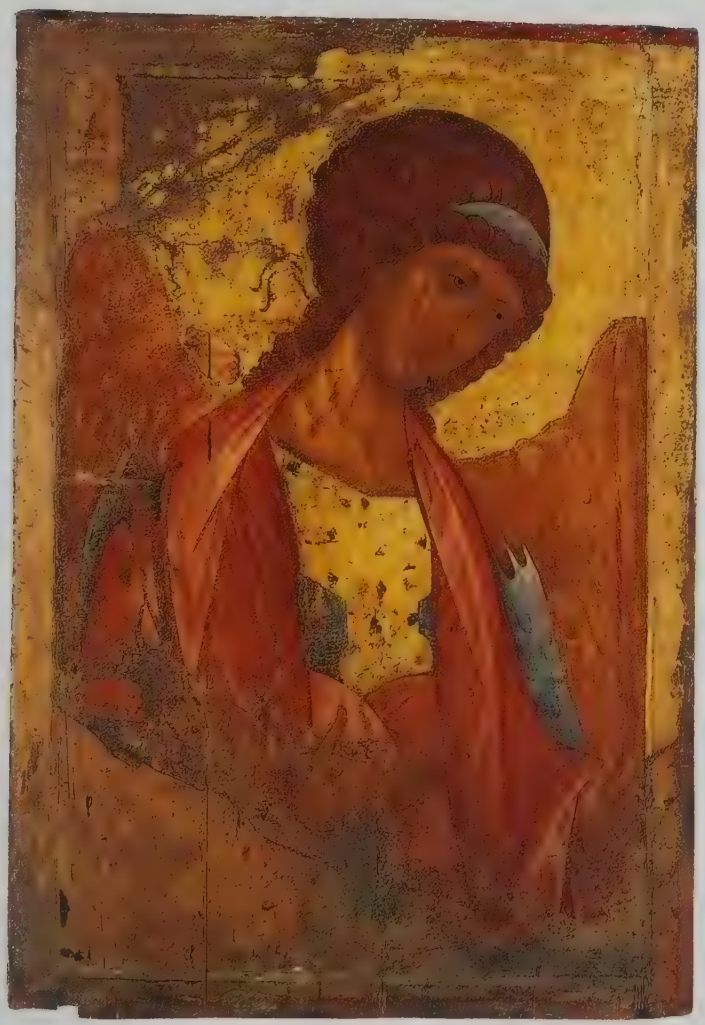
Some years earlier Theophanes the Greek, called Feofan Grek in Russian, migrated from Byzantium, which was being threatened by the Turks, to Russia, where his artistic life met its crowning glory. He died in his new homeland sometime between 1404 and 1415. Russian contemporaries who observed him at work noticed that he would walk back and forth on the scaffolding in the churches, in lively conversation with his observers. He was considered a wise man and a philosopher, in his lifestyle as well as in his artistic style "very skilled, even elegant." Talented and renowned as a master of book illumination, fresco painting, *and* icon painting, he created an outspoken expressive style of art similar to the late Byzantine (Palaeologus) Renaissance. This Byzantine self-made man was quite different in personality and in artistic talent from his contemporary Andrei Rublev, with whom, incidentally, he collaborated in creating the icons on the iconostasis of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Moscow's Kremlin.

Andrei Rublev, who was born between 1360 and 1370 and died before 1427, lived in the Andronikov Monastery in Moscow, which he left only to do commissioned work elsewhere. The model for the life of the monks in this monastery was the much venerated Sergei of Radonezh (d. 1392). In the deepest Russian primeval forest, sixty miles from Moscow, Sergei at first established a hermitage and then a monastery and a church, both of which he dedicated to the Holy Trinity. At this time, few ecclesiastical institutions in Russia were named for the Trinity; but, as a result of the example of Sergei, this dedication became more prevalent, and theological reflection on this central doctrine of the faith was stimulated. It may be assumed that icon artists, in particular, discussed the mystery of the Holy Trinity even more, as heretical opinions about this doctrine became more widespread. It is within this lively, discerning climate that Rublev's icon of the Holy Trinity was painted.

Furthermore, this and other icons attributed to Rublev are considerably restrained in contrast to the expressive exuberance of color and form manifested in the works of Feofan Grek. This aspect of the art of Andrei Rublev also has its spiritual roots in the asceticism of Saint Sergei of Radonezh, for which all exaggeration was foreign. We may quite rightly speak of an essential correspondence, even an identity, between the icon paintings of Rublev and his school and the ascetic spirituality of the great monastic father.

As the third star in the radiant trio of old Russian icon painters, we mention finally Dionysius. He was presumably born in the middle of the fifteenth century, and we may assume that he died around 1502 after completing the glorious Marian frescoes in the isolated Ferapontovo Monastery. Dionysius was not a monk but a layman, who, as a contemporary said, "does not pray with a brush in his hand." In this respect the opposite of Andrei Rublev, Dionysius was, however, artist enough to learn from his predecessor and at the same time to find his own style, which was thoroughly in accord with his lively self-esteem, a characteristic of the age. During the rule of the Grand Duke Ivan III (d. 1505), Moscow considered itself the successor of Byzantium, which had been stolen by the Turks, "the sons of Hagar."

For the people of this time the icons of Rublev were, because of their temperate spirituality, objects of veneration. They remained so, along with their creator, for a long time, but people also needed images that answered their questions. The icons of Dionysius met this need. Dionysius literally visualized the idea of "Moscow, the third Rome" with biographical icons (see p. 210) of significant ecclesiastics during the bellicose period of Tartar rule, just as his magnificent Marian icons made visual the comforting omnipresence of the Mother of God. Dionysius was justifiably called the Russian Madonna painter.



Left: Archangel Michael, Andrei Rublev, early fifteenth century.
We see on this icon from the Deësis tier in Zvenigorod the archangel with bowed head and rounded shoulders typical of Rublev's style. The colors of his garment invoke light and grace.

Above: The Dormition of the Mother of God, Feofan Grek, end of the fourteenth century.
Christ carrying the soul of his mother in his arms stands in a gloriole encompassing the whole scene behind the oblong deathbed of Mary, around which the mourning apostles stand. Above his head hovers a six-winged seraph. The two prelates behind the apostles are Hierotheus and Dionysius, legendary disciples of Paul and bishops of Athens, who, according to old chronicles, were present at Mary's death.

Above: The Last Judgment, Russian, 14th c. At the top, angels roll up heaven like a scroll, an ancient image for the end of the world. Underneath, Christ appears for the Last Judgment. Mary and John the Baptist and a host of angels surround him. To the left and right of the nearby eschatological throne of judgment *(hetoimasia)* sit the twelve apostles. Underneath, we see two angels with scales to separate the just from the sinners. In the lower half of the icon the damned are given over to Satan, and the just are led into paradise. Among those in the garden of paradise, next to the Mother of God, we see the good thief.

Above: Metropolitan Peter, Tver, first half of the 15th century.
Peter was the Metropolitan (1308–1326) of Kiev and of all Rus. He was the first to move his seat from Vladimir to Moscow, bringing to the dominion of the Duchy of Moscow a significant enhancement of state authority. This magnificent icon, with the bust of the sainted Metropolitan, is from an iconostasis in Otroca Monastery in Tver.

It appears doubtful that we can speak of a Moscow School of icon painting in view of the very differing modes of portrayal found there. On the other hand, we can justifiably speak of Moscow as a center of icon painting, if we recognize the diversity of its styles and forms of expression. Chronologically, it began with Andrei Rublev and the workshop of the Andronikov Monastery in the capital city. The end of the era of Moscow icon painting and the seeds of a new beginning are inextricably bound up with both the person and the reign of Ivan the Terrible.

Known by the year 1150 only as a border fortress of the Duchy of Vladimir-Suzdal, and after internal dynastic feuds for political power in central and northern Russia[22] and the overthrow of the rule of the Tartars, in the centuries that followed Moscow be-

Left: Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich and Xenia of Tver, end of the seventeenth century.
Many of the buildings of the city of Tver are the result of the efforts of these two saints, to whom Christ presents a model of the city as a sacred gift. Both were also the founders of the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Christ, which was built around 1285 to 1290. Above the scene, Christ sits enthroned, encircled by a double bow of rays.

Below: The Nativity of Jesus, Russian, early fifteenth century.
True to iconographic tradition, the Nativity scene is placed in a rocky landscape. Completely wrapped in her garment, Mary rests on a red carpet with the child in the manger next to her at the entrance to a cave.

The announcement to the shepherds, at the right, corresponds to the approach of the three wise men, on the left. The two scenes at the bottom depict women servants busy bathing the baby on the left and, on the right, a pensive Joseph conversing with a man whose identity is unclear. It may be the Prophet Isaiah or simply one of the shepherds who tells Joseph of the birth of the child.

came an Eastern European world power under Ivan III (1440–1505), the first to call himself "Tsar of All the Russias."

For the culture of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, and subsequently for its icon painting, two factors are fundamental: the reception and processing of the traditions of the aristocratic and municipal schools of painting in northern and central Russia, and a style that was more and more bound to represent aristocratic rule. The Orthodox Church was substantially involved in the establishment of this rule. The representatives of this political power bowed down before icons just as did the simple peasant or citizen or serf. For that reason there is an important, but often overlooked, social aspect of iconography that should at least be mentioned.

One of the most frequent themes of Moscow icon painting is the Vladimir Mother of God, the prototype of which is enriched by the various festivals and scenes of the journeys of this icon, depicted in images along its borders. The Trinity, in the form of the Hospitality of Abraham, has surprising narrative elements, which emancipate it carefully from its abstract dogmatic theological context and literally make it into something familiar to the beholder.

22 That is, the principalities and city-states of the *Zemsky Sobor*, the Assembly of the Land, the gathering of all those who considered themselves part of Rus.

The highly revered monastic fathers and founders of monasteries were now not only painted "solo," but together with their monasteries, making them into commercials for pilgrimages to them. Much love went into the depiction of the monastic buildings and the wooded seclusion of their environment. Liturgical hymns, the Orthodox Creed, and the Lord's Prayèr, thematically arranged in sections, were now included in the pictorial world of icons, something heretofore unheard of. Multitudes of people and a love of detail are the main characteristics of the Moscow style.

A turning point in the history of Russian icon painting at the end of the Middle Ages is bound up with Ivan the Terrible (d. 1584) and his Metropolitan, Makary (d. 1563). Each knew in his own way that a new age had dawned for Russia. Ivan IV subjugated the independent minor princes with brutal violence and formed a state along the lines of the absolutist states of the West, in particular that of England. For the Church, and for icon painting, the Synod of the Hundred Chapters[23] of 1552 was decisive. It regulated the supervision of the artistic workshops through the bishops, and proclaimed the art of Andrei Rublev as the model for artists. Makary himself had his own artistic workshop. The slender icon The Church Triumphant, reminiscent of a frieze on Roman victory columns, was produced there. It is also called the Blessed Hosts of the Heavenly King and, with the glorification of Ivan in the center of the picture, it is considered an example of political iconography.

Another of Ivan's counselors during his reform-friendly days was the priest Sylvester. In his *House Book*, he describes the important role icons played at that time in house and family. He was also head of an artistic workshop, although none of his icons are extant.

The Church Triumphant, School of Makary, around 1560.
This 396cm x 144cm icon of historic-religious content is a painted song of praise to the glory of Russia as a refuge and defender of the Christian faith. In the large circle above at the left, we see the heavenly Jerusalem symbolized. The boy Jesus, sitting on his mother's lap, distributes golden crowns to angels, who depart in orderly fashion to crown the victorious heroes, primarily Ivan IV Vasilivich, "Tsar and Autocrat of all the Russias." Adjacent in a smaller circle, the Archangel Michael sits on a winged horse as General of the three Christian military flanks. Ivan the Terrible, who defeated the Tartars in 1552 and burnt their capital city, Kazan (in the circle above at the right), rides just behind him. Following him are Vladimir II Monomakh (1113–1125) of Kiev and, further back, Vladimir I, Grand Duke of Kiev, with his sons Boris and Gleb, who were murdered by their brother and canonized. In the uppermost column, Alexander Nevsky leads his army, which conquered the Swedes in 1240, defended Russia against the Teutonic Knights, and subjugated Lithuania. The military formation below is led by Dmitri Donskoi, who defeated the Tartars in 1380 on the Field of Snipes. The entire artistic ensemble is a marvelous document of the mingling of the political power of the Eastern Rome with Orthodox belief.

23 In Russian, *stoglav*.

Old Testament Trinity with the Deeds of the Angels, Russian, around 1670.
Two-thirds of the picture is taken up by the three heavenly visitors and the smaller figures of Abraham and Sarah in reversed perspective, who are shown here as wealthy landowners. Above the scene of the Hospitality of Abraham, the oak tree of Mamre can be seen in the middle of the upper third of the picture; to the left and right of it, the narrative is shown in small successive scenes: the butchering of the calf for the meal with a reference to the sacrifice of Isaac, the greeting and washing of the feet of the angels, their departure, the visit with Lot, the accompaniment of Lot and his daughters, and Lot's wife, who has turned into a pillar of salt.

As in all Orthodox countries, the workshops in Russia, with the exception of the monastic workshops, were economically independent handicraft businesses organized into guilds. There is no reason to romanticize the work in these stuffy rooms that smelled of oil and paint. The diversity of styles produced in these workshops by painters of greater or lesser talent must have troubled a centralist and bureaucratically governed state such as the one ruled by Ivan the Terrible. After all, at the time icons were the most important media for influencing public opinion, although they were soon to receive competition in the form of book and picture printing.

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, Ivan put the icon painters in the Kremlin under the supervision of civil servants of the Tsar. The new prototypes soon aroused the protest of a conservative public. Within the Arsenal (in Russian, the *oruzheinaya palata*, or Chamber of Armaments), which had developed from a weapons storeroom into a kind of art academy, there was also a Chamber of Icons. Its members were not only called upon to paint icons, but also commissioned for other works as well; in other words, the icon painters were also trained in other skills and arts. The administration of the Chamber of Armaments recruited talented painters from all over the country, brought them to Moscow, and paid for their emancipation from serfdom, if necessary, in order to educate talented people. Exceptionally talented artists were even sent abroad, to Greece as well as to Western countries. In addition, the Chamber also controlled a lucrative icon trade with other Orthodox countries. High quality icons were at that time coveted gifts of the Tsars to foreign emissaries. The Icon Chamber was not dissolved and returned to the Church until Peter the Great (d. 1725).

One of the most distinguished artistic personalities of the Tsars' Chamber of Armaments was Simon Ushakov (d. 1686). His main contribution to perennial religious painting was the cautious way in which he was able to combine traditional content with new forms that appealed to wide circles of the population. The icon of the Vladimir Mother of God Planting the Tree of Russian Sovereignty painted in 1668 is one of his masterpieces. With its thematic details, it is an expression of the piety of the new dynasty of the Romanovs, who, following Byzantine tradition, felt they were the vicars of God on earth. They even assented to being called holy, a stance already partially evident in Ivan the Terrible, but interrupted by the end of the Rurikid Dynasty and the civil wars, the Time of Troubles, which lasted from 1605–1612. The new rulers' increased need for ostentation, which had started with Ivan the Terrible, was satisfied completely by the artists of the Chamber of Armaments, Ivan Maksimov, Nikita Pavlovek, and Sinoyev, to name a few.

At the same time, it is apparent that efforts were made to render everyday reality more exactly. We now begin to see depictions of nature as well as genuine interiors

of rooms with the furnishings in them. The saints are depicted with that "blessed beauty" that the Baroque so loves in its depiction of the divinely blessed. In his polemic against a contemporary defender of conservative-traditional painting, Yosif Vladimirov writes, "The pleasing forms and beauty of these saints are creations of God, just as God speaks at creation, 'We will create humans according to our own image and likeness.' If then the first human was created and carries God's image in his person, then why do you, Pleskovik, find fault with these beautifully formed and lively depicted persons, and why do you look askance at their blessed loveliness?"

In connection with this new understanding of "reality," we must mention, last but not least, the painting of portraits that was cultivated in the Chamber of Armaments, portraits not only of significant monastic fathers and saints, but also of popular military leaders, sovereigns, and ecclesiastical prelates. The older conception of the "re-presentation" of a holy person gave way to "representation" in a worldly sense, even if it remained within the framework of icon painting. The depicted individual was no longer "image-worthy" simply on the basis of his or her spiritual qualities, but rather on the basis of his or her position in Church, State, or society in general. Its task was not so much to convince as it was to impress.

Planting the Tree of Russian Sovereignty, Simon Ushakov, 1668.
The rose bush, entwined around the image of the Vladimir Mother of God, is planted by Metropolitan Peter and Grand Duke Ivan Danilovich; on each side of her there are ten medallions. On the left there are high ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries, on the right saints are depicted. Below to the far left we see Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, on the far right Tsarina Maria with her two children.

Above: The Beheading of John the Forerunner, Stroganov School, seventeenth century. John awaits the sword in front of a rosewood wall surrounding a villa-like prison. At the right, a costly bowl has been placed to catch his head. The henchman looks more like a graceful dancer in his fluttering robe than an executioner. Typical of the Stroganov style is the fact that even the hair garment of John is woven with golden thread.

Right: The Miracle of Theodore the Recruit, Nikifor Savin, seventeenth century. According to legend, Theodore, a Roman soldier who was martyred at the end of the third century, rescued his mother from the claws of a dragon. Nikifor Savin, who with his brother Nasary and his father Istoma Savin received commissions from the family of the Tsar and from the Stroganovs, depicted this legendary event in minute detail on this icon.

Page 92: Two Panels of a House Altar (A diptych shaped like the royal doors of an iconostasis), Stroganov School, 17th century. In the cupola-like top parts of the panels we see, at the left, Only Begotten Son, Word of God; and at the right, the Whole Creation Rejoices in You. *In the upper left quarter:* Praise of the Mother of God; Procession with the miraculous icon Vladimirskaya; Discovery of the Miraculous Icon of Kazan; Veneration of the Sash of the Mother of God. *In the upper right quarter:* the Meeting of Joachim with Anna at the Golden Gate; the Birth of Mary; the Entrance of Mary into the Temple; the Synaxis of the Mother of God. *In the lower left quarter:* the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem; the Crucifixion; the Descent from the Cross; the Entombment of Christ. *In the lower right quarter:* the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (Pokrov); Veneration of the Robe of the Mother of God; the Dormition of the Mother of God; the Mother of God of the Burning Bush.

The Stroganovs, a wealthy merchant family, lent money to Ivan the Terrible to finance, among other things, his military campaign over the Ural Mountains into western Siberia. The main seat of the Stroganovs was at Solvychegodsk ("Salt City on the Vykegda") in northern Russia. From there, they ruled a huge empire reaching to the North Sea and the Ural Mountains. It has been reported that some members of the family painted icons themselves, but it is questionable whether any of these have survived. The concept of the "Stroganov" School refers to precious, small icons of saints, the name patrons of different family members. The military saints, in particular, are delicately depicted in an almost affected way. We can well imagine how those who could afford these treasures might pray in front of a name patron icon for success. Affluence and elegance create in the beholder of these icons a unique feeling of religious intimacy.

Lying in the midst of swamps at the mouth of the Neva River, the houses and palaces of Russia's "window on the West" were still under construction when, on June 29, 1703, the feast day of the Apostles Peter and Paul and the name day of Peter the Great, the Metropolitan of Novgorod consecrated the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in the new capital of the Russian Empire. The iconostasis of the Cathedral, the wall of icons separating the nave from the altar, was remarkably innovative. Instead of the classic pattern of Russian church architecture, it had wide gates and the altar area itself was visible from the congregation—a hint of the changes to come in icon painting. This had been unheard of earlier.

In the midst of a population that consisted not only of Orthodox Russians but also of "multi-faith" foreigners, the icon had to assert itself, as it were, in its denominational uniqueness. Interestingly enough, some icons were now being painted in oil. This was inconsistent with traditional tempera technique, and contradicted traditional concepts of design by adding the sensuality created by light and shadow. Because of this, very life-like depictions of apostles were now being created, depictions of men as might be seen on the streets of Saint Petersburg. Parallel to this development icons were still being painted using traditional techniques, but the style was being influenced by secular portrait art.

Finally, simple wooden carvings became popular with the poorer people; carvings portraying the saints were an inexpensive substitute for the expensive icons. Although they were forbidden by the Church, *luboknye kartiny*, as they were called in Russian, were disseminated by itinerant merchants throughout all of Russia. These two art forms are very different. The icon, despite the variety of patterns and the division of labor among the artists, was the identifiable achievement of a particular workshop and its leading painter; the wood carvings, on the other hand, were mass produced, even if the first cut, so to speak, did, in fact, come from the hand of a master. Most noticeably, these carved wooden images do not communicate to the beholder the religious aura associated with the rites and prayers that take place while the icons are being made.

Page 94: The Mother of God Bogolyubskaya with Zosima and Savaty of Solovek, seventeenth century.
Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky of Vladimir kneels in prayer before the Mother of God on an icon from the year 1158. This depiction was very popular and frequently imitated. Sometimes the praying prince is replaced by other people, without changing the name of the icon, Mother of God Bogolyubskaya. Here we see the sainted founders of the Solovetsky Monastery, who, with the monks, are pleading for help from the Mother of God.

Above: Saints Onuphrius the Great and Peter of Athos, eighteenth century.
Onuphrius lived as a hermit during the fourth century in the Theban desert of Egypt. Peter lived around 700 in a desolate area of Athos. Both were venerated as prominent ascetics. Because their liturgical feasts were celebrated on the same day, they are often depicted together on icons. According to legend, their beards were so long that they could wrap themselves completely in them during the winter. The painter's manual of Athos describes them thus, "Old man, naked with long hair, has his beard down to his feet."

Page 97: The Mother of God of Tikhvin, end of the fifteenth century.
The biographical scenes correspond to the apocryphal Gospel of James: 1. Joachim and Anna bring a sacrifice; 2. The High Priest rejects Joachim's sacrifice; 3. The annunciation to Joachim; 4. The annunciation to Anna; 5. The encounter of Joachim and Anna; 6. The Birth of Mary; 7. The blessing of Mary; 8. The caress of Mary; 9. Her first steps; 10. Her presentation in the Temple; 11. The miracle of the staff; 12. Her engagement to Joseph; 13. The Annunciation at the well; 14. The Annunciation in the house; 15. The testing of Mary by water; 16. An angel appears to Joseph; 17. The Prayer of Mary on the Mount of Olives; 18. An angel brings a palm branch; 19. The presentation of the candelabra; 20. The Dormition of Mary.

Saint Ferapontovo Beloozersky, seventeenth century.
Ferapontovo lived as an ascetic mute near a monastery, which provided him with bread and water, the only nourishment he consumed.

Zosima and Savaty, Solovek, seventeenth century.
Zosima (d. 1478) and Savaty (died c. 1460) founded a monastery on the island of Solovek in the White Sea, which developed into the largest monastic community of northern Russia in the seventeenth century, and had considerable influence on Church and State.

As in all Orthodox countries, the monasteries in Russia were an appropriate place for icon workshops. This is particularly true for images of the Mother of God, since monks from the earliest days have been fervently devoted to Mary. Numerous icons are closely associated with prominent monasteries, such as the Don Monastery in Moscow or the Tikhvin Monastery near Novgorod. A literary work of some stature originating in the Kiev epoch, called the *Paterikon of the Kievan Monastery of the Caves*, communicates the inner reality of these monastic workshops for us in a unique way. In this work, we read about the personality of Alimpy, the first artist of icons and wall painting. We glimpse the light and dark side of the painter, the division of labor employed, and the competition between the monks of a given monastery. This work also depicts the reality of icon painting in stuffy work rooms filled with stale air, even those outside of monasteries, as anything but a pious idyll.

Despite the differences in the quality of the icons they produced, the monastic workshops have one thing in common: They retained the obligatory visual patterns set down by the painter's manuals for a longer period than did their secular rivals. Even after they had cautiously opened up to the spirit of the times, icons from this source kept their traditional structural patterns as well as the liturgically-determined choice of colors, and also an almost stubborn insistence on reverse perspective, the indispensable "door to the world of the spirit."

Рождество Святаго Николы Чудо Крещение Святаго Николы Чудо Успение Святаго Николы Чудо Принесение в Ермахлицу Чудо

Творца Творца Сохранение жены Напутие или Творца Внучение наготе

Поставление Епископом Святаго Николы Чудо

Святый Николай до Изятый трехъ дев въ блудъ

Святый Николай Чудо Изятый Корабля на Примора отопотопа

Поставление Епископа Святаго Николы Чудо

Святы Николай чудо Изятый трехъ сыновей отец

Принесение Мощей Святаго Николы Чудо

Святый Николае избави арибов Избавление Святаго Николы
Избави сына василия врацы Успение Святаго Николы

Upon acquiring its own patriarch in 1589 with the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, the Russian Church agreed to dispense with all of its own rites that had come into practice and to adapt its liturgy to that of the Greek mother Church. This thankless task was accomplished by Patriarch Nikon (d. 1681). Under the leadership of the Archpriest Avvakum (Habakkuk), the protest against this Reform soon became an opposition movement reaching broad sections of the population. Avvakum was burnt at the stake in 1682 in Pustosersk in northernmost Russia, along with other supporters of the movement. The Church of the Patriarch referred to them as schismatics; they called themselves Old Ritualists, or, less frequently, Old Believers.

The concern of the Old Ritualists with regard to liturgical life, including the veneration of icons, was primarily to preserve the practices before the reform of Nikon. As time went on, however, there were no more icons left from the past they so glorified. It was the task of craft communities to paint new icons. The most well-known of these villages were the centers of Palekh and Cholui and Mstera in central Russia. The workshops in these villages, organized into guilds, were established at the end of the seventeenth century. Icons from these workshops were not limited to the classical prototypes of the "three stars" (Rublev, Feofan Grek, and Dionysius). That village artists favored the use of chrysography, decorative molding, masterful miniature depictions, and other rarities shows the distinct influence of the workshops of the Tsars as well as that of the Stroganov School.

In addition to the craft communities, there were workshops in the monasteries of the Old Ritualists in the far North. However, icons were lost with old documents and liturgical utensils when these places were destroyed by the Russian State and the Church. In Palekh and elsewhere, wealthy merchants who were Old Believers supported and financed the production of icons. In his short story, "The Sealed Angel," Nikolai Leskov paints a wonderfully lively picture of the living circumstances of Old Ritualist icon painters.

Page 98: Saint Nicholas with Vita, Palekh, eighteenth century.
In the center of the picture, Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, is depicted as a half-length figure. To the left and right of his head, we see Christ with the Gospel book and Mary carrying the episcopal omophorion. It is reported that Christ and Mary appeared to him in just this fashion in prison, after the Emperor had him arrested for preaching against Arius. The twelve biographical scenes show from right to left: 1. The birth of the saint; 2. His baptism; 3. Nicholas is brought to school; 4. His father gives him into the charge of a teacher; 5. His ordination to the diaconate; 6. His consecration as bishop; 7. Nicholas throws gold into the bedroom of the three daughters of a poor man to save them from prostitution; 8. The rescue of three innocent persons from death by decapitation; 9. Saving the Patriarch Anastasius from drowning; 10. Nicholas brings a son who had been kidnapped by the Arabs back to his parents; 11. The death of the saint; 12. The transportation of his remains to Bari.

Above: Saint Anthony the Roman, Russian, seventeenth century.
An icon from the prayer house of the Old Believers in the Volkhovo cemetery in Saint Petersburg. Anthony, formerly a wealthy Roman, lived for a whole year as a hermit on a stone at the seashore. Then, according to legend, a storm washed him and the stone out to the open sea and, on the eve of the feast of the Nativity of Mary, he was washed ashore at Volkhov near Novgorod. He then founded the Church of the Nativity of Mary, which, as we can see on this icon, he presents in the form of an architect's model to the Mother of God.

PICTORIAL THEMES

Anyone who has visited a fully adorned Orthodox Church with its iconostasis has surely been impressed by the world of images crowding in. The "beautiful corner" of a private home evokes similar feelings. In great churches and in small prayer nooks alike, there is yet another impression, for in the flickering of candles or oil lamps, figures seem to move, to step out of the semidarkness of the room, leaving the walls and pillars to approach the beholder, as the image world of the Christian East becomes alive and knowable.

In order to understand it, however, we need a more thorough knowledge of its themes. These themes, in turn, presuppose knowledge of the hymns. To this end, each theme presented here will include a text from the abundant treasure of Eastern hymnody.

First, we will consider representations of the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. The statements these themes make about God's saving action in the Incarnate Son constitute the core of the Christian faith and form the focus of the icons of the Eastern Church. After an introduction to the scenes of salvation history in the life of Jesus, we will study in detail the image of Christ himself. From the portrait of Christ we get a sense of the Orthodox devotion to Christ, and see how icon painters dealt with this subject, since no authentic likeness of Christ has been handed down to us.

The life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ would remain wondrous, mysterious events, were they not embodied in the personlike character of the triune God, that is to say, in the mystery of Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity. The mythological ideas of the past, obscure and incomplete though they were, in a sense prepared the way for this mystery, which, for the Christian religion, means the mutual communication of the eternal Godhead as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In contrast to a widely held view that God did indeed create the world, but then left it to its own devices, the triune God never abandons creation, but rather "visits" it in the only begotten Son and in the Holy Spirit.

This utter personhood of God implies that humans can hear God's call and follow it. First and foremost among those who accept God's word is Mary, the Mother of God. For this reason, her life and death belong to the great themes of icon painting. The many images of the Mother of God are surprisingly diverse, and considerably outnumber the portraits of her Son.

Having spoken of the mutual communication among the persons of God, we must not overlook the fact that there are also messengers, angels, at God's disposal, who receive specific divine commissions. The orderly world above, with its unending hosts of angels and their visual representation in wall painting and icons, is as impressive as anything the human spirit has ever created. When the Eastern Church speaks of the "angelic life" of the martyrs and saints, the powerful spiritual bond that holds together earth and heaven in this devout world view becomes evident.

Page 100: Vladimir Mother of God with New Testament scenes and Fathers of the Church, workshop of Dionysius, 1514 (?)
The central section of the picture is a copy of the famous miraculous icon that was presumably painted in Byzantium at the beginning of the twelfth century, then came to Kiev and was placed in the Cathedral of Vladimir in 1161 (thus "Vladimirskaya"), and was finally brought to Moscow at the end of the fourteenth century as protector of the expanding Grand Duchy. Around 1420, this twelfth-century icon was set in a gold frame ornamented with twelve scenes from the life of Jesus and twelve Fathers of the Church. This illustration of the decorative frame shows a copy; the original is currently in the Arsenal at Moscow, the "armory." From upper left to right are: 1. The Annunciation; 2. Basil the Great; 3. The Nativity of Christ; 4. John Chrysostom; 5. The Presentation in the Temple; 6. Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian; 7. The Baptism of Christ; 8. Athanasius of Alexandria (?); 9. Cyril of Alexandria; 10. The Resurrection of Lazarus; 11. The Entry into Jerusalem; 12. Spiridon, Bishop of Trimithus on Cyprus; 13. Unknown Church Father; 14. The Transfiguration of Christ; 15. The Crucifixion; 16. Unknown Church Father; 17. Leonty, Bishop of Rostov; 18. Christ's Descent into Hell; 19. Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia; 20. The Ascension of Christ; 21. Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra; 22. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit; 23. Aleksi, Metropolitan of Moscow; 24. The Dormition of Mary.

The Gospel of John puts the basic Christian experience into the statement of faith: "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us."[1] To be sure, God also spoke to the witnesses of the Old Covenant, but always from a great distance, from mountain tops, hidden behind clouds, or even in a pillar of fire. In the dark of the night, God struggled with Jacob and dislocated his hip. God became a "touchable God" only in Jesus Christ, the Son. In him the Word, through which God created the world, came itself into the world, and walked bodily among us. He did not speak to humankind from high platforms like famous orators or rulers. He moved about in our midst and spoke to his fellow humans in the streets and market places. He went into their homes and shared their joys and sorrows. His word was the "sword of the Spirit,"[2] with which he relentlessly exposed injustice and sin. "Never has anyone spoken like this!"[3] testified his contemporaries.

If the Word of God in Jesus Christ lived on earth, then the "Son of Man" can also be visualized and depicted in images. Jesus fulfilled the law of the Old Covenant through the message of the grace of God. In so doing, he addressed the old prohibition against making images of God: abolishing it, on the one hand, with regard to his humanity, and, at the same time, preserving it for his divinity, "Whoever sees me, sees the One who sent me."[4]

From the beginning, Christian art was faced with a great dilemma: In contrast to the heroes, rulers, and wonder workers of late antiquity, no portraits of Jesus had been handed down, nor were there any illustrations of his life, suffering, and resurrection. The artist had nothing to go on except the writings of the New Testament. Later came the interpretations of the Church Fathers and the Councils, and exegesis in general, which were validated by the Holy Scripture. From the pens of known and unknown masters of poetry came hymns, which tried to capture and extol the events of salvation in the life of Jesus in a manner at once perfect in form and clear in meaning. They preserved the substance of Christianity, keeping it a religion of the Word of God incarnate, and not one of religious illusion. As such hymn texts also became normative for the portrayal of the life of Christ, a unity of image and word emerged, a "pictorial theology" that became characteristic of icon painting.

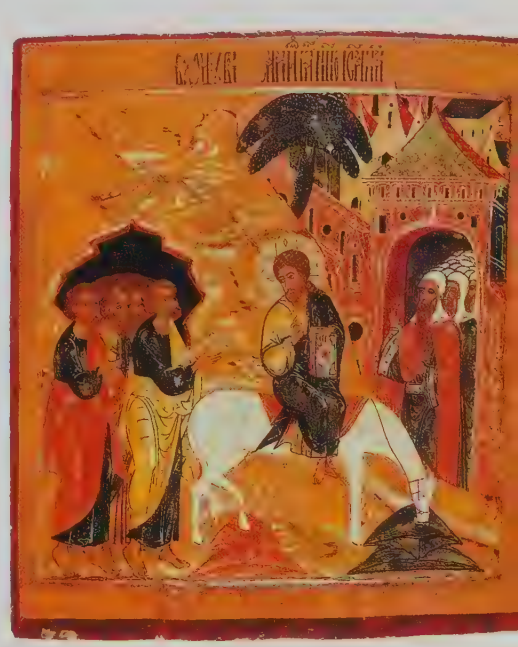
The texts also correspond to the musical form of the hymns used in worship. Church music, which was monophonic until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, can be paraphrased as "sung speech." Choral music[5] in the Eastern Church has essentially remained pure "word music" up to the present. This means that the music follows the flow of the words, not the other way around. In the classical Byzantine era, there was a particular musical notation, different from that of the West, for this type of vowel-oriented song. Even at home, Orthodox believers are accustomed to singing appropriate seasonal hymns softly before an icon.

The marked subordination to a text, this "literary imperative" characteristic of Byzantine religious art, accompanied by the shunning of individual creativity, led to the development of the literature of official regulations, which became known as Painters' Manuals or Pattern Books (see page 236). All this makes it clear that the arts of the Eastern Church are bound to the word or text in a special way. Finally, we should also keep in mind that part of the essence of the icon is to be a pictorial theology, so that the Church could reach the large numbers of her flock who could not read.

The understanding of representations of Christ on icons certainly does not differ basically from images of the West, but it does vary from it in some important points. The fascination that Western viewers continue to find in icons, however, should not be the last thing that we have to say about them. The following chapters will attempt to present icons in their intellectual and spiritual reality. Here, without surrender of the self, the "vagabond" spirit of the Westerner can find peace. It is helpful to gaze at an icon in conjunction with the text of a hymn, what we call "meditation," that is, the encircling of the true center. By so doing, we may experience what it is like to participate in the Eastern Church's praise of Christ.

1 John 1:14.
2 Ephesians 6:17.
3 John 7:46.
4 John 12:45.
5 Organs are not normally used in Orthodox worship.

Page 102: Icon of the Passion, Thessalonika, third quarter of the fourteenth century.
This small icon, only 51cm x 41cm, contains scenes from the Passion of Christ: two scenes on each of three horizontal bands. The two scenes at the top, the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet, differ from the other four scenes in that they have an "architectural" background. At the supper, Jesus is sitting at the end of the table, an unconventional placement. Also, in the Washing of the Feet the focus is at the left, where Jesus is drying Peter's feet. The middle band contains the scenes of Jesus' agonized prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane while the disciples sleep, as well as the kiss of Judas and the arrest of Jesus. The bottom band shows the scourging of Jesus and his *via dolorosa,* with Simon of Cyrene carrying the Cross. The sequence of the scenes is taken from book illumination, where miniatures of the main scenes are shown in succession.



The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, Central Russia, seventeenth century.
This icon, probably painted in Yaroslavl, expresses very beautifully the contrast between the simply dressed disciples of Jesus coming out of the dark and the wealthy city dwellers walking through the city gate. Before entering Jerusalem, Jesus leans back towards his followers and shows them the Gospel book, so that they may know what has been predetermined for him.

"Today the Virgin bears the Master
within the cave.
Today the Master is born as a babe
of a Virgin Mother.
Today shepherds behold the Savior,
wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid
in a manger.
Today the Master who cannot be touched
is wrapped as a babe in swaddling rags.
Today all creation rejoices greatly
and makes glad,
for Christ is born of the Virgin Maid."

Megalynaria at Matins for the Nativity of Christ.

Left: The Nativity of Christ, Greek, seventeenth century.
In the center of the picture, Mary kneels before the Infant Jesus, caressing him lovingly as the shepherds pay homage. At the left, an angel proclaims the Good News to a lone shepherd. Above this, we see in miniature the three Wise Men approaching on horseback. Above at the right hover a host of angels. Joseph sits lost in thought at the bottom of the picture.

Right: The Nativity of Christ, Cretan School, seventeenth century.
Mary rests in front of the cave on a red couch, an allusion to the purple furnishings of the birth chamber of Byzantine empresses. The three Wise Men are grouped together against a dark red background; the angels also appear as a unit above them. At the bottom of the scene are two pairs of interdependent figures: Joseph and Isaiah, and two women who are preparing the bath for the infant.

Instead of the stall as in the West, the cave is the central focus in Eastern icons of the Nativity of Christ. In fact, this aspect of the icons actually preserved an old tradition. The hilly environs of Bethlehem had caves where the shepherds brought their flocks at night or in time of danger, or where they spent the night themselves. When Joseph came to Bethlehem for the census, a cave was the only shelter he found for himself and his pregnant wife, Mary. The apocryphal accounts tell how the cave filled with supernatural light when the Mother of God entered it. After about 330, when December 25 was officially recognized as a festival, more and more pilgrims streamed into the "city of David." They could look through a grill into the cave of the Nativity with the manger, and could pray at this holy place. After the seventh century, when Bethlehem and the Holy Land were conquered by Islam, the cave ultimately found its home on the icon, as a "relic of remembrance." In the Nativity icon, the Mother of God rests on a couch looking at the child in the manger, and often at the women who are bathing him. Joseph is always sitting off to the side, engrossed in thought. The Magi, as the Wise Men from the East are called, approach on horseback. The shepherds draw nearer in adoration. An aged shepherd is frequently shown standing at the outer edge; he has been interpreted in various ways, as the Prophet Isaiah or Ananias or even the Tempter, especially when he is standing in front of the brooding Joseph.

Below: The Presentation in the Temple, Cretan School, seventeenth century.
The entire right side of the picture is taken up by Simeon, who is bowed over to receive the Child Jesus from the arms of his mother. Behind Mary, the prophetess Anna holds a scroll with the words "This Child created heaven and earth." Joseph follows behind her with the sacrificial doves.

According to the Gospel story in Luke 2:22–39, the parents of Jesus went to the temple to offer a sacrifice as prescribed in the Law. This was the occasion of the meeting between the Christ Child and the aged Simeon. Therefore, in the Eastern Church, this feast is called the "Meeting," in Greek, *hypapante*. It is celebrated on February second as is the feast of the Purification of Mary in the West (also called the Presentation of the Lord). The *Painters' Manual of Athos* describes the scene as follows, "A temple with a dome. Under the dome a table on which rests a golden thurible. The holy Simeon, the welcomer of God, holds in his arms the Baby Jesus, who is blessing him. The Blessed Mother stands on the other side of the table stretching her hands toward the Infant. Joseph is behind her holding two doves in his robe. Next to him stands the prophetess Anna, who points to Christ and speaks, her words recorded on a scroll, 'This Child created heaven and earth.'"

"Simeon, tell us: who dost thou bear
in thine arms, that thou dost rejoice
so greatly in the temple?
To whom dost thou cry and shout: 'Now
am I set free, for I have seen my Saviour.
This is He who was born of a Virgin.
This is He, the Word, God of God,
Who for our sakes has taken flesh
and has saved man...'?"
Sticharon from the Vespers for the Feast of the Presentation

Left: The Presentation in the Temple, Andrei Rublev, 1408.
Simeon had been promised that he would not die before he saw the Messiah. When Mary and Joseph come to the temple to sacrifice two doves for her purification and to present their firstborn to the Lord, Simeon, led by the Spirit, also comes to the temple. He recognizes in Jesus the longed-for Promised One; he reverently takes the Child, who smiles at him, into his arms. Mary and Joseph, with the sacrificial doves in their garments, stand absorbed in thought; they are deeply moved by the prophetic words of Simeon, as is the prophetess Anna standing behind him. The temple architecture with the reddish altar under a graceful canopy, the rounded shoulders and delicate lines of the figures and the bright coloring of this icon are all typical of Rublev's style, whose religious solemnity is not austere and unyielding, but always graceful and attractive.

"We reach the mid-point of the days,
which begins with the saving resurrection
and shall be sealed with the divine
Pentecost.
It beams with rays of light,
uniting the splendor of both,
and it is worthy of honor,
because it prefigures
the appearance of its glory,
the Ascension of the Lord."
From the Hymns for Mid-Pentecost

Left: Jesus in the Temple, festal icon for Mid-Pentecost, Russian, middle of the sixteenth century.
In icons portraying this event, Jesus usually sits elevated on a throne among the astonished Pharisees. In this example, the scene is in front of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin in Moscow. Jesus is shown oversized; the nimbus marks him as the incarnate Logos.

Right: Jesus in the Temple, Pskov, seventeenth century.
With a green temple tower and other churches in the background, Jesus sits in a golden robe on a wide bench-throne, his feet resting on a two-tiered red footstool. The Pharisees discuss, with lively gesturing, what seems to them the incredible erudition of the twelve-year-old in their midst.

According to Luke 2:41–50, the twelve-year-old Jesus, during a visit of his parents in Jerusalem for Passover, remained in the Temple to debate with the scribes there. His parents find him only after a lengthy search. Responding to their reproaches, Jesus says, "Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" The icons show Jesus either on an elevated seat, teaching the scholars, or in lively discussion with them. Regarding the scribes and Pharisees, the *Painters' Manual of Athos* adds, "They look at each other and are full of consternation." The theme of the twelve-year-old Christ in the Temple appears in early Christian art as far back as the fourth century, and in book illumination from the tenth century. The "Discussion Type" is found in the icon painting of Byzantium around the same time, not becoming widespread in Russia until the fifteenth century. Within the church year, this icon belongs to the Easter cycle and is called "Mid-Pentecost," because it is celebrated on the Wednesday between Easter and Pentecost. However, the Gospel for this day focuses on the adult Christ, who, when the Feast of Booths "was half over,"[6] got into a spirited discussion with the scribes. This is why this icon is occasionally painted with a bearded Christ.

6 John 7:14.

Today the nature of water is sanctified.
And the Jordan is parted in two;
It holds back
the stream of its own waters
Seeing the Master wash Himself.

The Hymn of Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (d. 638) at the Great Blessing of the Waters.

All four Gospels relate that Jesus went to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. This subject appears very early in Christian art and is elaborately developed later in connection with the feast day hymns and baptismal rites.

The following formula developed in icon painting: Jesus stands in the water of the Jordan while John baptizes him. Ministering angels stand as witnesses on the bank with towels in their hands. Frequently in the waves of the Jordan, which generally is shown in a narrow, rocky valley, we see sea animals and the pagan god of the Jordan, who is either fleeing from Christ or worshipping him.

The Baptism of Christ is the subject of the icon for the sixth of January, one of the oldest of Christian feasts. Its origins are the pagan and later Christian consecrations of the Nile during periodic flooding. According to the Roman calendar, these festivals always took place between December 25 and January 25, and date back to the second or third century. This feast of the sixth of January was eventually called Theophany, the Appearance of God. Even today the main focus is the blessing of water at the nearest river, with large numbers of people participating.

Left: The Baptism of Christ, Greek, end of the eighteenth century.
The Baptism of Jesus, with the heavenly witness for his title, Son of God, was embodied in a major feast very early in the East, being celebrated on January sixth. Besides the traditional pictorial elements, Saint Thecla appears here in the water with her martyr's crown. She was to have been drowned but was rescued by a bear.

Right: The Baptism of Christ, Greek, Cretan School, around 1600.
Here Jesus is standing in the foreground. To his right is the god of the Jordan river, sitting in the water with a pitcher in his hand, looking up at Jesus. John is laying his hand on the head of Jesus. The two angels in front have their heads lowered reverently, while the third looks up to heaven, where the dove of the Holy Spirit descends in the fullness of light.

"Prefiguring, O Christ our God,
Thy Resurrection, Thou hast taken in Thy
ascent upon Mount Tabor
Thy three disciples, Peter, James, and John.
When Thou wast transfigured,
O Saviour, Mount Tabor was covered with light.
Thy disciples, O Word,
Cast themselves down upon the ground,
Unable to gaze upon the Form
that none may see.
The angels ministered in fear and trembling,
The heavens shook and the earth quaked,
As they beheld upon earth the Lord of Glory."
Hymn from the Vespers for the Feast of the Transfiguration

Left: The Transfiguration of Christ, Romanian, first half of the sixteenth century.
This icon from the Agapia Monastery in Neamt renders the biblical accounts quite faithfully. Jesus stands between Moses and Elijah, wreathed in a supernatural light, whose rays have thrown Peter, James, and John to the ground as if they had been struck by arrows. At the left, the disciples are ascending the mountain with Jesus. At the right, they are descending Mount Tabor; they look back fearfully, but are calmed by Jesus' hand raised in blessing.

Right: The Transfiguration of Christ, central Greece, seventeenth century.
In this image the ascent and descent are omitted. The transfigured Jesus stands in front of a dark circle symbolizing his divinity. The circle is overlaid with two squares, which are arranged to form a star-shaped octagon, symbol of the coming age.

With the exception of John, all the Evangelists[7] relate the following event: Jesus went with Peter, James, and his brother John to a high mountain where "...he was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun and his clothing became dazzling white." At the end of the sixth century, a basilica was built on Mount Tabor, where this event was said to have occurred, for the numerous pilgrims who wanted to pray there. At the same time the feast day was set for August sixth. Its Greek name, *metamorphosis* ("a complete change of form"), describes what happened to Christ on the mountain more precisely than the English word transfiguration. The icon painters followed the Gospel accounts precisely, and so they show the ascent and descent from the mountain. While Jesus is depicted in a dazzling white garment in front of a dark aureole (the substance of divinity is hidden in darkness!), not infrequently one of the disciples is also shown in a gleaming robe. Generally the "Three Peak Composition" appears as it is described in the *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos,* "A mountain with three peaks; Christ stands on the middle peak in a white garment and bestows a blessing; radiant light surrounds him. To his right stands Moses with the tablets, to his left is the Prophet Elijah, looking beseechingly at Christ. Below Christ lie Peter, James, and John, looking up as though also transfigured."

7 Matthew 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; and Luke 9:28–36.

Left: The Raising of Lazarus, Greek, around 1600.
The miracle of the raising of Lazarus, who had already been in the grave three days, was understood and celebrated liturgically in the early Church as a foreshadowing of the Resurrection of Christ, as a declaration of the eschatological resurrection of the dead, and last, but not least, as an allusion to the new life we receive in Baptism. This icon shows realistically how the door to the grave is removed and Lazarus appears. The focal point is the triangle formed by the grieving sisters at the feet of Jesus, the men opening the grave and the resurrected Lazarus. Jesus and his disciples are separated from the rest of the people by a rocky ledge, so that two more groups are formed. Thus this icon radiates serenity despite the many persons depicted; our attention is directed from the outstretched arm of Jesus to the man raised from the dead.

Right: The Raising of Lazarus, cloisonné enamel, Georgian, twelfth or thirteenth centuries.
Surrounded by a cathedral in the background and the light blue rock ledges to the right and left, the scene of the raising of Lazarus looms large in the foreground. Through vivid coloring and expressive gestures this master of cloisonné has created an icon that effectively makes visible Christ's divine power over death.

The raising of Jesus' friend Lazarus, celebrated in the Eastern Church on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, constitutes a solemn prelude to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. It is possible that the commemoration of Lazarus Saturday extends back to the time of the early Church. There was, for instance, a church named the Lazarion next to Lazarus' burial cave in Bethany from the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century. The Cave of Witness itself, however, remained the primary goal of the numerous pilgrims. Through the centuries the formula for painting this icon has closely adhered to the following hymn and the description in John 11:1–45,

"Filled with pity by the tears of Mary
and Martha, Thou didst command the
stone to be rolled away from the tomb.
Calling the dead man Thou didst raise him
to life, for Thou art the Life of the world,
O Christ our God.
Through him Thou hast given us
assurance of our resurrection.
Glory to Thy might, O Savior!
Glory to Thine almighty power!
Glory be to Thee who sustainest all things
by Thy word!"
The Kathisma Hymn of the Matins for Lazarus Saturday.

Matching the devout matter-of-fact outlook of the Gospel, icon painters often show a man at the burial cave holding a handkerchief to his nose.

"He who reigns on the throne
of the cherubim
Now sits on the colt of an ass.
Today he rides to his
voluntary suffering,
He hears the children sing,
"Hosanna!" and the crowds reply:
"Hasten to save us, O Son of David!
Save the work of Thy hands,

O blessed Jesus!
For this reason Thou hast come to us.
Reveal to us Thy glory."
The Kathisma Hymn at Matins on Palm Sunday

Above: The Entry into Jerusalem, Andrei Rublev, 1405.
Followed by his disciples, Jesus rides up to the Gate of Jerusalem, where the curious come to meet him. The airy atmosphere of the visual field with its delicately shaded landscape, as well as the gently curved outline of Jesus turning to his disciples, reveals the master hand of Andrei Rublev.

8 The Latin word for penitents is *virides*, "the green ones," hence perhaps the origin of the German, *Gründonnerstag*, "Green Thursday."
9 Luke 22:21.
10 The Ikos of the Canon at the Matins of Great and Holy Thursday.
11 Matthew 26:48.

Both the hymn lyrics and the visual images of the Passion of Christ are clearly influenced by the early tradition of the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem. It is remarkable how the drama manifested in the hymns and intensified over time is reproduced with intellectual discipline on icons, at least in the Classical era. Just as the Christian week begins not with Monday but rather Sunday, the "Lord's Day," so also does the "Great and Holy Week" begin with the "Lord's Day of Palms," as Palm Sunday is called in the Eastern Church, where it was already being celebrated in the fourth century. A century later, the Bishop of Jerusalem, as representative and successor of Christ, took a "Palm Donkey Ride" with large numbers of the people participating. This theme was not admitted into icon painting; the focus for the icon painters remained the depiction of the solemn entry of Christ on a donkey through the open city gate of Jerusalem. This solemnity was in no way contradicted by the high spirits of the boys tearing off the palm branches.

Maundy Thursday is called the Great and Holy Thursday. Others have called it "Thursday of the Holy Mysteries." Ancient Jerusalem was the scene of solemn worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on Maundy Thursday as early as the fourth century. Beginning in the late afternoon and ending in the early evening, it commemorated the institution of the Last Supper at about that same time of day. The penitents,[8] those under ecclesiastical discipline, were also accepted back into the congregation at this service, so that they could receive Communion during the Easter Vigil. The peculiar, tension-charged atmosphere of the first Maundy Thursday, as portrayed in the Gospels, was captured in the hymns of the Eastern Church and represented on the icons. Jesus is gathered with his disciples around a table, either sitting or following the ancient custom of reclining. As he blesses bread and wine, the disciples can be seen talking with each other and gesticulating wildly. Jesus has told them that one of them would betray him. "But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table."[9] Then Judas is seen stretching far across the table with his hand reaching toward the chalice.

Judas is mentioned time and again. He lies like a gloomy shadow over the event in some house in Jerusalem, an event in which we are all invited to take part in this hymn by Cosmas of Maium (eighth century):

"Let us all draw near in fear to the
mystical table, and with pure souls let us
receive the bread; let us remain at the
Master's side, that we may see
how He washes the feet of the disciples...
And let us do as we have seen, subjecting
ourselves to each other and washing
one another's feet, for such is
the commandment that Christ Himself
gave to His disciples; but Judas, slave and
deceiver, paid no heed."[10]
Ikos of the Canon at Matins for Maundy Thursday

The Washing of the Feet (according to John 13 performed by Jesus during the Last Supper) shows the disciples gathered around the Lord, who is washing the feet of Peter. We can often see in the background a crowing cock on a pillar, alluding to Peter's denial before the servant girl.

After the Last Supper, Jesus goes with his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. Although this scene has appeared in early Christian art since the fourth century, it was depicted with great reservation so as not to show Jesus at the moment of his greatest humiliation. Not until the eighteenth century are the following scenes united by aid of "complex transfer" into one picture: 1. pleading prayer of Christ; 2. Christ waking his disciples, saying, "Could you not stay awake with me one hour?"; 3. Judas receiving his pay for betraying Christ to the representatives of the Sanhedrin.

"Of Thy mystical supper, O Son of God,
Accept me today as a communicant.
For I will not speak of Thy mystery
to Thine enemies,
Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss,
But like the thief will I confess Thee.
Remember me, O Lord, in Thy kingdom."
Hymn of the Great Entrance at the Liturgy on Great and Holy Thursday.

The icon portrays Judas's betrayal thus: Jesus stands before a band of soldiers armed with spears; he is slightly separated from the group of his disciples. Judas steps up to Jesus to kiss him. "The man I kiss is the one; arrest him."[11]

Left: The Last Supper, School of Andrei Rublev, fifteenth century.
Unusual on this icon of the Last Supper is the almond-shaped aureole around Christ, emphasizing his divine nature, as well as the bright red table cloth, which makes it clear that this meal is a banquet of love.

"With his hands the
betrayer receives
the bread,
With his hands he secretly
receives the silver,
The price of Him who
fashioned man with
His hands;
So the servant and
deceiver Judas remains
depraved."
The Kontakion of Maundy Thursday

Above: The Washing of Feet, Russian, mid-fifteenth century.
At the left edge of the picture, Jesus, standing, dries Peter's feet. The apostles, some sitting, some on their haunches, are arranged in two rows. One group is still waiting for the washing; the other has already had this unimaginable honor bestowed on them by the Master.

Left: Christ in Gethsemane, School of Moscow, first half of the eighteenth century.
This small icon (20.3cm x 13.9cm) contains three separate scenes, two of which take place in the garden of Gethsemane: Jesus' agonized prayer before his death and the waking of the three sleeping disciples. The rocky landscape separates these scenes from the third, which is set before an architectural background; here we see the traitor Judas receiving his payment from the Pharisees. All three events are presented in a realistic narrative style, painted with skill, but without additional spiritual or religious depth.

Left: Two Miniatures of the Passion, sections of a Venetian diptych, around 1300.
These miniatures painted on parchment were decorated with seed pearls and small disks of polished crystal. They belong to a diptych of the Passion, which is set in a sumptuous gold-plated filigree frame. It is presumed to have been a gift of King Milutin to the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos.

Right: The Crucifixion of Christ, Dionysius, around 1500.
The cross with the elongated body is raised far above the groups of people, who are leaning sideways. The angels surrounding the Cross in their flight are already carrying it to the world above. Like the Crucified One, the figures of the Mother of God and her attendants and John with the centurion are quite elongated and thin in the style of Dionysius; this gives them an ethereal appearance. In the ground underneath the cross we catch sight of the skull of Adam. The death that came into the world through him was vanquished by Christ.

The descriptions of the early Church do not portray Judas as one of the central figures in the Passion of Jesus, but rather as an instrument of God. We find no moral judgment in the Gospels. This fact influenced the image of Judas in the Eastern Church. In contrast to the West, he is never depicted in an ugly or repulsive way, but just like the other disciples. Unlike the others, he is shown without a halo, as the halo was considered proper to a canonized saint.

Scenes of the Passion are depicted on single icons as well as on icons with several different panels. The figure of Christ, stripped to the waist and bound to a pillar, appears on icons of the flagellation. "Who clothes himself with light as in a garment, stood naked at the judgment; on His cheek He received blows from the hands which he had formed" (from the tenth Antiphon of the Service of the Twelve Gospels for Good Friday).

"Thus says the Lord to the Jews:
My people, what have I done to you?
Or how have I offended you?
To your blind I gave sight,
Your lepers I cleansed,
The paralytic I raised up from his bed.
My people, what have I done to you,
And how have you repaid me?"
From Antiphon Twelve at Matins for Good Friday

Next to the hymns of the Resurrection, those of the Crucifixion of Christ are among the most dramatic that Christian poetry has produced.

The stillness of Good Friday evening provides the setting for the hymns and icons of the Descent from the Cross and the Entombment of Christ. The Descent from the Cross shows Joseph of Arimathea taking the limp body of Christ, while Nicodemus and John remove the nails from his hands and feet and put them in a container.

"The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linen, and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb."

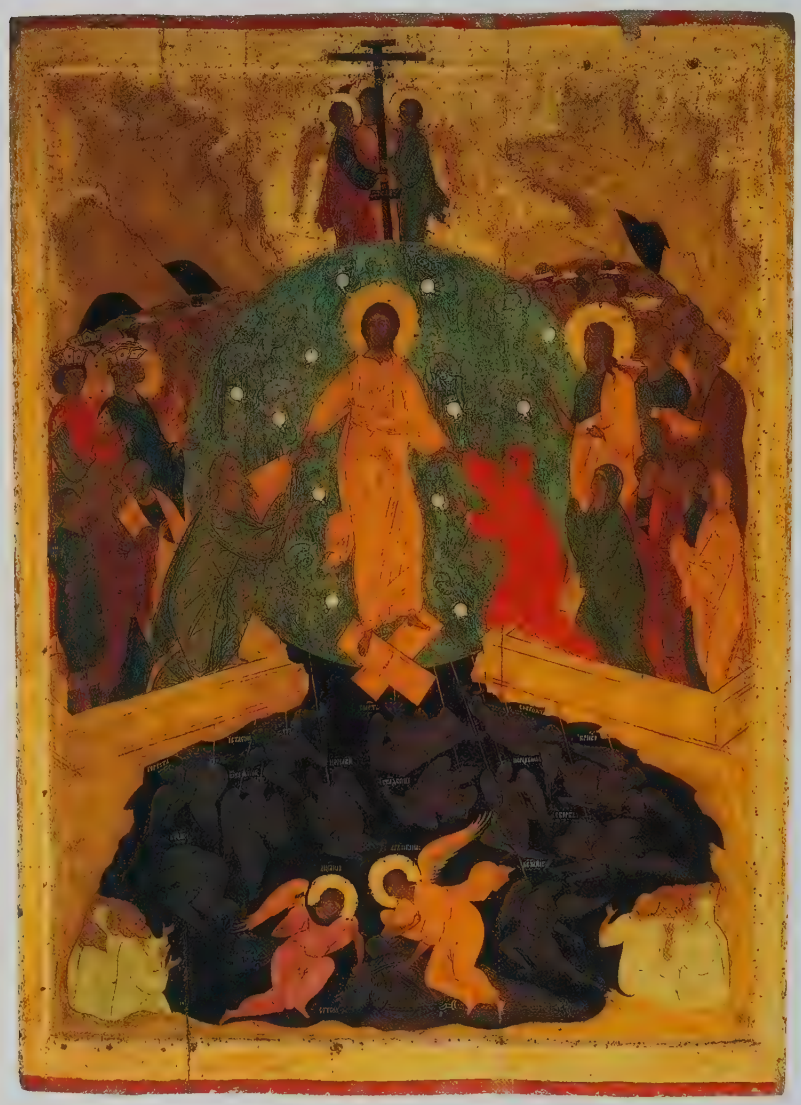
"Who blossoms in beauty through
Thy goodness more than all mortals,
appears now as dead and
without form, he who is
the jewel of the cosmos."
Hymns from the Matins of Holy Saturday

This text helps us to understand why Christ, whether hanging dead on the cross or lying in the grave, never loses his physical beauty in the iconographic world of the Eastern Church. Or, to quote Dostoyevsky, "Beauty will redeem the world." With singular tenderness, the icon painters depicted that little scene in which the Mother of God holds the head of her dead son in her hands.

"Lament me not, O Mother, seeing me in the tomb, the Son conceived in Thy womb without seed. For I shall arise and be glorified with eternal glory as God. I shall exalt all who magnify you in faith and love."
From the Easter hymns of Cosmas of Maium

Left: Christ in the Tomb, Cretan, end of the sixteenth century.
With the crossbeam behind him, Christ stands as a half-length figure, with upper body bare, in an open sarcophagus. His hands are crossed and his head is bowed. Here we are dealing with the variant of an early Byzantine Man of Sorrows icon, for in Russia the Man of Sorrows was always depicted with Mary, and was given the title "Do Not Lament Me, O Mother."

Right: Plate with Good Friday and Easter scenes, repoussé work, Georgian, eleventh century.
This gilded silver plate belongs to the Shemokmedi Monastery in Guria. The three integrated scenes on the plate, the Descent from the Cross, the Burial, and the Women at the Empty Tomb with an Angel and the Sleeping Guards, are identified by inscriptions. This eleventh-century plate was restored in the sixteenth century. Although it is only 25cm x 24cm, it makes a strong statement.



"Today Hell cries out groaning:
My power has been trampled upon.
The Shepherd is crucified
And Adam is raised.
I have been deprived of those I ruled.
Those whom I swallowed in my strength
I have given up.
He who was crucified has emptied
the tombs.
The power of death has been vanquished.
Glory to Thy cross and resurrection,
O Lord."

Sticharon at the Holy Saturday Liturgy

Left: Anastasis, Moscow (Workshop of Dionysius), 1495–1504.
This icon was created in the Ferapontovo Monastery near Vologda, where it was part of the group of feast day pictures on the iconostasis of the Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos. The risen Christ delivers Adam, Eve, and the forefathers of the Old Testament from the kingdom of the dead. The underworld is peopled with winged demons. Corresponding to them in the aureole surrounding Christ are points of light, which represent virtues. Both groups are in a constant spiritual struggle with each other. Such contrasting groups are found on icons as far back as the fourteenth century.
Right: Christ at the Gate of Hell, Venetian artist working on Mount Sinai, third quarter of the thirteenth century.
The Western Easter picture of the Victor rising triumphantly from the grave with the banner of victory in his hand corresponds to the Eastern *anastasis* image.

Though the expression "descent into hell" is much used, this phrase does not really communicate accurately the statements of the Christian creeds. These creeds do not recognize a "descent into hell," but rather the descent or the downward trip of Christ into Hades, the kingdom of the dead. Apocryphal gospels, from which the icon painters drew their ideas, describe this descent very dramatically. Striding out from the depths of an enormous aureole, flanked by his disciples with John the Forerunner and the prophets of the Old Covenant, the Risen One demolishes the gates of Hades. With commanding gestures, he snatches Adam and Eve, representing all humanity, from the tombs. In the underworld itself, angels torment the morbid pair, death and the devil, for all eternity. Even today the Orthodox Churches re-enact the descent of Christ with a solemn procession around the dark church. And then a cry of joy is heard, "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!" Here is an example from the great treasure of Eastern Easter hymns, one which describes the *anastasis*, Greek for "resurrection," and, with it, the Easter icons.

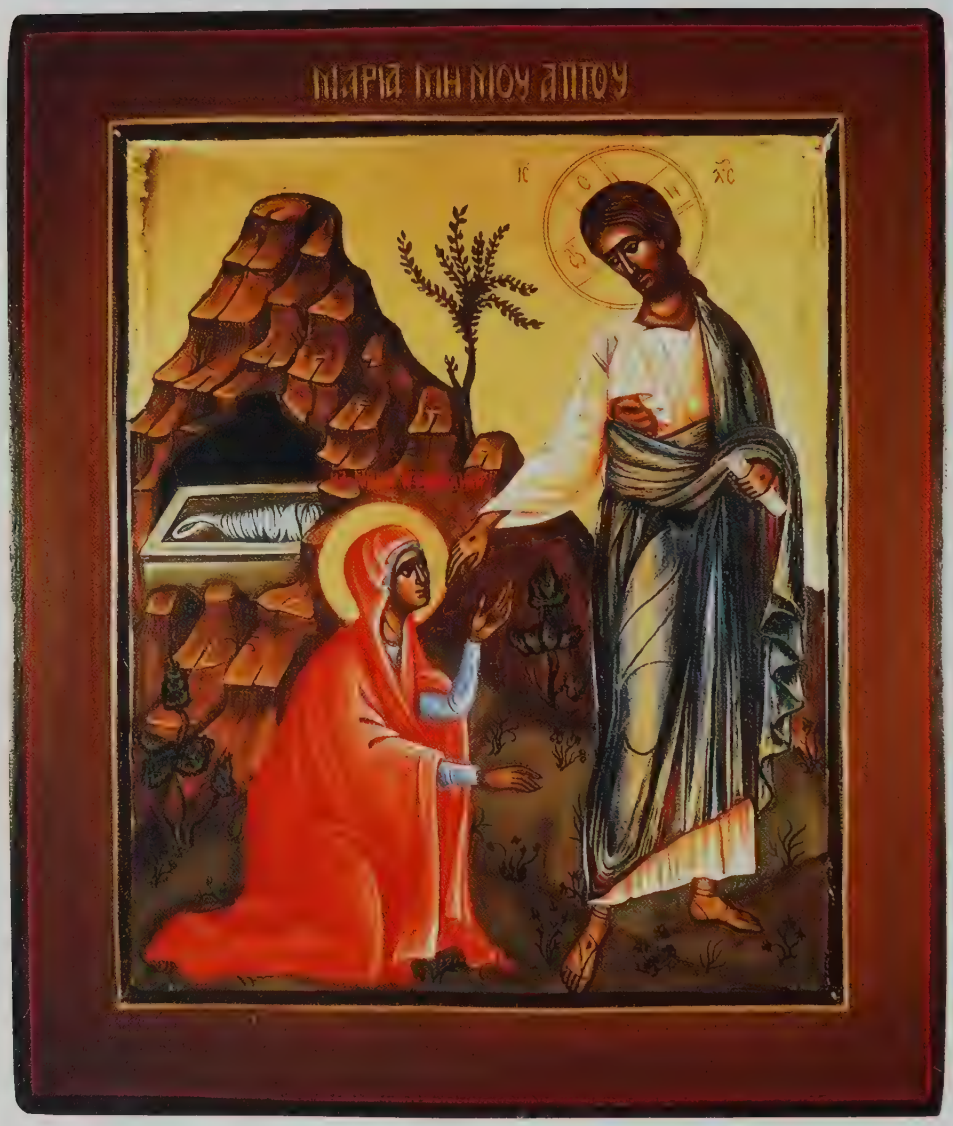
"This is the day of Resurrection, let us be illumined, O people. Pascha, the Pascha of the Lord. For from death to life and from earth to heaven has Christ our God led us, as we sing the song of victory...Let us purify our senses, and we shall see Christ shining in the unapproachable light of His resurrection. We shall clearly hear Him say Rejoice..." *From the First Ode of the Golden Canon of John of Damascus*

Left: The Three Women at the Tomb, Northern Russia, seventeenth century.
The women have approached the tomb between towering rocks. One of the angels has rolled away the heavy stone. The women look reverently into the empty tomb, which now contains only the linen bindings. The angel at the left points to the cloths, indicating clearly to the women that their Lord and Master has risen.

Right: The Women at the Tomb, central Russia, seventeenth century.
According to the witness of the synoptic Gospels, on the morning after the Sabbath, women bearing jars of ointment went to anoint the body of Jesus. At the tomb, which was empty except for the linen bindings, angels proclaimed to them the Resurrection of Jesus. This is the origin of the pictorial theme, The Women at the Tomb, which is quite old, dating back to the third century. Since the Greek word for the ointment is *myron,* the women are also called the Myrrhbearers. The angel's gesture toward the empty tomb clearly conveys the Easter message to the stunned women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

The picture of the three women, in Greek, the *myrophorai* or Myrrhbearers, who, according to Luke 24:1, carry ointment to the tomb where they hear the Resurrection message, is one of the oldest of the Easter portrayals, appearing in Dura Europos about the year 230. By about 400, this icon pattern was already fully developed: Pilate's guards sleep in front of a tomb, which is shown as a rotunda, and at the slightly opened door an angel utters to the women the paschal words, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" A masterful ivory panel, also from around 400, shows how the Risen One steps from the tomb toward the hand of God, while the three women stand in front of the angel with vivid expressions on their faces. Local traditions were also involved in the genesis of this image. In icon painting one type gained general acceptance; its subtle intimacy clearly different from the drama of the Descent into Hell.

"Before the dawn, Mary and the women
came and found the stone rolled away
from the tomb.
They heard the angelic voice,
'Why do you seek among the dead as
a man the One who is everlasting light?
Behold the clothes in the grave!
Go and proclaim to the World:
the Lord is risen!
He has slain death, as He is the Son
of God, saving the race of men.'"
Hypakoe (Hymn) in the Matins of the Resurrection



Above: Noli Me Tangère, copy of an original from the Cretan School, beginning of the sixteenth century.
This may be one of the first icons to depict the scene, so popular in the West, of the meeting of Christ and Mary Magdalene on Easter morning. The scene is interpreted here by an artist working on Crete. The figures of the kneeling Mary Magdalene and Christ appearing before her fill almost the entire space of this 57cm x 42.5cm icon. In the background, we see the empty grave set in the rock; at the center higher up is a little tree, spring-like and paschal, in front of a bright sky, further reinforcing the delicate, lyrical atmosphere of this picture. (The illustration shows a twentieth-century copy of the original icon, painted by Angela Heuser.)

John 20:11–18 shows Mary Magdalene weeping at the tomb of Christ on Easter morning. An angel asks her why she is crying and she replies, "They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him." As she turns around, the Risen One stands in front of her. Assuming that he is the gardener, she tearfully repeats her question. Only when Christ calls her name, "Mary," does she recognize him and say, "Rabbuni," that is, great Master. The Risen One however says, "Do not hold on to me..." (Latin, *Noli me tangere*) "...because I have not yet ascended to my Father." He sends her away to share the news of his Resurrection with the disciples.

Above: Christ and Mary Magdalene, Crete, around 1600.
In narrative style, several small scenes on this icon—the crosses on Golgotha, the women and angels at the empty tomb, the Risen One appearing to the women—surround the main scene in the foreground, in which the supposed gardener reveals himself to Mary Magdalene as the Risen One.

It is interesting to note that this section, John 20:11–18, is not included in the Orthodox Easter lectionary, just as the depiction of this scene is equally rare in classical Byzantine icon painting. This may be because of an apocryphal tradition linking Jesus and Mary in a relationship, described by Jacob de Voragine (d. 1298) in his *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend). "Jesus exorcised seven evil spirits from her and inflamed her completely with love; he took her as his special friend and made her both his hostess and also his companion in his travels." Another book titled *The Golden Legend*, a well-known medieval collection of saints' legends, also reached Russia in the seventeenth century. The earliest known Noli Me Tangere icon comes from the end of the sixteenth century. A delicate hint of *double entendre* may, for all sorts of reasons, have made these icons attractive to viewers of both sexes.

Left: The Doubting Thomas, Dionysius and his workshop, 1500.
Thomas is skeptical about the testimony of the other apostles that they have seen the Lord. Then Jesus appears again to the assembled disciples, where Thomas is now among them. Jesus challenges the unbelieving doubter to put his hand in his side. The very personal confession of faith of Thomas, "My Lord and my God," is answered by Jesus with, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet believe!" The icon, part of the feast-day tier of an iconostasis, places the meeting between Christ and Thomas directly in the center, as a key event for every believer.

Right: The Doubting Thomas, Novgorod, around 1500.
According to the biblical text the Risen One appears to his disciples "when the doors were locked."[12] For that reason this subject is also called "the Locked Door." However, on the icons, the scene usually takes place in front of a church. In this example, the buildings are slightly curved around a forecourt, to create the impression of an inner room. Christ stands elevated on a place of honor, as was once customary for Byzantine emperors. In order to avoid the reproach of "unbelief" and to express the Lord's affection for his confused disciple, the scene, in which Christ permits Thomas to grasp him, is also called "the Faith of Thomas Strengthened."

One theme that icon painters and the viewers of their works dealt with again and again is the meeting of the doubting Thomas and the Risen One. The most likely reason for this was that they could see themselves in this apostle. Thomas's touching Christ's wound on his side with his index finger has a feeling of delicacy such as is hardly ever found otherwise on icons. Dostoyevsky writes about this, "For a realist the miraculous does not give birth to faith, but faith gives birth to the miraculous. The apostle Thomas said that as long as he did not see, he could not believe. And when he had seen, he said, 'My Lord and my God.'"

"Thomas touched Thy life-giving side
With an eager hand, O Christ God,
When Thou didst come to Thy apostles
Through closed doors.
He cried out with all:
Thou art my Lord and my God."
Kontakion for Thomas Sunday

12 John 20:19.

Although the biblical texts do not refer to the presence of Mary at the Ascension of Christ, the Mother of God is usually portrayed standing in the midst of the apostles, as is the case for the three icons shown here. She symbolizes the Church, left on earth as a witness to Christ.

Page 119: The Ascension of Christ, Palestinian school, ninth or tenth century.
The apostles stand crowded closely together around the Mother of God, who is portrayed as an orant. The upper half of the icon shows a huge aureole with the enthroned Christ, held by four angels.

Left: The Ascension of Christ, Greek, seventeenth century.
Only a small strip of sky separates the rocky soil of earth, where angels console the apostles at the departure of their Lord and Master, from the aureole in which Christ is carried by angels into heaven.

Right: The Ascension of Christ, Tver, fifteenth century.
The apostles watch with agitation the departure of Jesus, while angels explain to them the meaning of the event, assuring them, "He will return in the same way that you saw him go up to heaven." (Acts 1:11)

The Ascension and the Resurrection were originally celebrated together on Easter Sunday. In the fourth century, the commemoration of the Ascension was combined with that of Pentecost with a procession to the Mount of Olives. In the fifth or sixth century, the Ascension was formally fixed on the fortieth day after Easter. Early Christian ivories show scenes in which the resurrected Christ proceeds from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre upward to the Mount of Olives, where he grasps the hand of his divine Father reaching out to him from a cloud. In the East, a different formula developed in icon painting, which had been associated with images of the *apotheosis*, or deification, of the Roman emperors. Just as the emperors are carried up on a circular shield by eagles or protective spirits, Christ is also borne to heaven in an aureole by angels. The lower section of the icon shows angels, who, as messengers of God, explain the meaning of this event to the Mother of God and the apostles. The consoling tone is unmistakable; it is communicated to those praying the Ascension hymns and those contemplating the Ascension icons. Thus they are allowed to participate in this departure to the Father, the culminating salvation event.

In a formal sense, the unaccompanied image of Christ is a "portrait" and is usually shown in half-length. Its goal is the re-presentation, that is, "the making present again," of the Redeemer as the eternal Word of God, similar to the way that a portrait[13] is supposed to "present" a particular person. These images of Christ are suitable for wall paintings in church interiors, particularly above the altar, as well as for private devotions in the "beautiful corners" of Orthodox homes. To better understand this extensive group of depictions of Christ, we will consider briefly its history and tradition.

The conquests of Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), extending as they did from the Near East to central Asia and India, had laid the groundwork for late Greek culture, Hellenism, which was at once multicultural and religious in tone. The goal of Hellenism was to fill the oikumene with the ideals of its new vision of humanity. It was in this context, quite different from earlier ones, that Christianity developed.

It goes without saying that this new conception of humanity as spiritually free and independent was eagerly embraced in art. In place of the rigid, often idol-like images of gods and humans, we now see realistic and expressive portraiture. This art was predicated on the revival and expansion, particularly in Egypt, of an old artistic technique called encaustic, or wax color, painting (cf. p. 238). At that time, every large city had many practitioners of this artistic craft. The portraits they produced are so realistic that we might think they were painted just yesterday. The Egyptians laid these portraits over the faces of their mummies instead of the stiff god-masks used at an earlier period. If the Egyptians were concerned with the physical survival of the body after death, the Christians believed in the resurrection of the "spiritual body"[14] after the physical body had turned to dust. But they, too, had portraits done in encaustic, so that after someone died they could lose themselves in reflective memories at the picture of the departed one. The surviving icons in the Monastery of Saint Catherine show that icon painters took up the technique eagerly, creating extraordinarily lifelike portraits of the saints, and especially of Christ.

Another concept from the time of Alexander the Great that influenced Christianity was the late Classical portrayal of the *apotheosis* of the emperor after his death. This was also significant in the emergence of the image of Christ. The deified emperor appeared in the sky as the "invincible sun" or *sol invictus*, whose birthday,[15] from the time of Emperor Aurelian (d. 275) onward, had been celebrated on December 25th as an imperial holiday. Therefore, the Christians replaced the sun-worship of the Roman emperors with the birthday of the "Sun of Righteousness" on December 25. All these things must be kept in mind in discussing the unaccompanied image of Christ.

In their portraits of Christ, however, icon painters had the task of reproducing the ideal image—that is, of combining the sublimity of his divine Person with his true humanity. At the same time, the beauty of the humanity redeemed by him was supposed to shine forth in the beauty of his image.

Below left: Christ Enthroned, Dome Mosaic, around 1150.
High in the dome of the Martorana Church in Palermo the Pantocrator sits enthroned in a medallion bordered by a text proclaiming "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). On the ringed surface surrounding the Pantocrator—not shown here—four archangels are shown in adoration, paying homage to Christ, the sovereign Lord.

Below right: Pantocrator between Emperor Constantine IX and Empress Zoë, mosaic in the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, between 1028 and 1034.
The imperial couple approaches the throne of the mighty Lord from the right and left, humbly bringing gifts. On this mosaic, the head of Romanus III Argrus, the first husband of the empress, was simply replaced by the head and name of her second husband, Constantine IX Monomachos, after her second marriage.

Page 120: Christ Pantocrator, Russian, around 1600.
"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God (Revelation 1:8), "...who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." The oldest representation of the Pantocrator is found in the Rabula Manuscript of 586. In the early Middle Ages, the Pantocrator looks out from the domes and apses of the cathedrals over the entire expanse of the church. Depictions on icons are not seen until the High Middle Ages; the pattern that developed is exemplified on the icon shown here. Christ is shown frontally and in half-figure, the right hand raised in benediction and in the left hand a Gospel book, either open or closed. This Russian icon has an overlay of precious silver.

13 Derived from Latin word *portrahere*, "to bring something forward."
14 1 Cor. 15:44.
15 In Latin, the *dies natalis soli invicti.*

Above: Christ the Redeemer, Moscow, early fourteenth century.
Because only Christ's head and shoulders are depicted on this icon, his elongated face, with the enormous dark-shadowed eyes and the small nose, appears even closer to the praying viewer. The face, set in a frame of dark hair, wears an expression of deep seriousness mingled with kindness and mercy.

"The blessed and only Sovereign,
the King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
who alone hath immortality,
who dwelleth in unapproachable light,
whom no one hath seen,
nor can see:
To him be glory and eternal power.
Amen."
I Timothy 6:15–17

Above: Christ the Redeemer, reverse side of a Hodegetria Mother of God icon, Suzdal, second half of the fourteenth century.
Like the philosophers of antiquity, Christ is usually painted in half-figure, facing forward. At the top, next to the large halo and behind the noble countenance, can be seen the first letters of the Christ monogram. Typical features of the Pantocrator image are the bearded face with hair parted in the middle, the right hand raised in benediction, and the left hand holding either a manuscript adorned with precious stones or an open Bible.

The Greek word *Pantokrator* means "Ruler of all" or "Preserver of all." Christ is not just the High Priest of the Church, he is also its Lord. Early evidence of this concept is found on Byzantine coins in the time of Emperor Justinian (527–565) as an expression of the idea that the Emperor is the Vicar of Christ. The severe look of the Pantocrator conveys more than Christ's universal-cosmic power. As the true Lord of the ruler of the Romans, Christ delegates to him power to be the Upholder of the World, the *Kosmokrator*, one of his titles of honor in court ceremonial. The unity of Church and State, the Eastern "Kingdom of the Grail" that has always so fascinated the West, with its never-relinquished claim to world domination, all this is expressed in the look of the Pantocrator.

Although this pattern was used quite early in wall painting because it was so impressive, it did not become generally accepted in icon painting until the Middle Ages.

In this regard we must remember that not every icon bearing the name Pantocrator

Left: Christ Pantocrator, Byzantine, thirteenth century.
When the Pantocrator is depicted in full figure, it is almost always in conjunction with other persons—patrons or interceding saints. This Byzantine icon in narrow vertical format presents Christ in majestic stature; he is shown alone, but with a Bible and one hand raised in benediction, the iconographic characteristics of the Pantocrator type.

Right: Christ Enthroned, Novgorod, fourteenth or fifteenth century.
Like the Byzantine emperors before him, the Pantocrator sits frontally on an elaborately adorned throne, his feet on a red, upholstered footstool. In his hands he holds an open Bible. Christ is presented here as King of all Kings, who in sublime majesty communicates the Word of God through the Gospel to all people.

fits this category from a strict iconographic standpoint. Fortunately, there are some guidelines to help define this type. Early examples have an appearance of youthfulness. But after the Iconoclastic Controversy, the Pantocrator is more and more frequently portrayed as a mature man, commanding respect. Carefully groomed hair and beard become very important. Usually this image of Christ appears as a half-figure portrait in accordance with the prototype of images of famous teachers. The outer and under garments are in the customary styles of late antiquity. While the right hand is raised in benediction, the left hand holds an open or closed Bible. When open, it usually displays quotes from the Gospels, the most frequent being, "I am the Light of the world,"[16] "I am the Door to the Sheepfold,"[17] or less often, "Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens,"[18] or "Come, you blessed of my Father."[19]

16 John 8:12.
17 John 10:7.
18 Matthew 11:28.
19 Matthew 25:34.

Above: Acheiropoietos Eikon. Image of Christ Not Made by Hands, Novgorod, second half of the twelfth century.
The head of Christ without a neck, in front of a large cruciform nimbus. Hair and beard are well groomed and extend in four locks, two from his chin and two sideways from his head. The countenance radiates majesty; the eyes are fixed forcefully on the beholder, who cannot escape their mystical fascination.

Above: King Abgar Receives the Mandylion, painter from Constantinople (?), after 944.
Just as the Byzantine emperors sent their portraits all the way to the borders of their empire to be, as it were, their representatives, so Jesus, according to legend, sent a hand towel (mandylion) with the imprint of his countenance to King Abgar of Edessa.

Accounts of miraculous images of Christ painted without any human involvement go back as far as the sixth century. It is interesting to note that among these the first to be so designated were of the Pantocrator type. The creation of a completely new prototype is bound up with a series of legends about King Abgar of Edessa.[20] According to these legends King Abgar, called "the Dark," lived at the time of Christ. He wrote to Christ and asked him to heal him of a serious illness. Christ answered that first he had to see his own hard fate through to the end, but that after his Ascension he would send one of his disciples with a letter. This disciple was a man named Thaddeus, who was sent by the apostle Thomas. These letters are supposed to have been found in the State Archives of Edessa and were considered to be a true picture of Christ, as a famous Byzantine man once wrote to a friend, "When you read this letter of mine, you are seeing me."

In addition to the letter motif, stories sprang up that Christ pressed a hand towel over his face, thus miraculously producing an imprint "not made by hands," in Greek, *acheiropoietos*, which he then sent to Abgar. The Greek word for "hand towel," stemming from the Persian, is *mandylion*, in Russian, *ubrus*. An icon from Mount Sinai, created after 944, shows King Abgar with a crown, sitting on a throne, receiving from the hand of a messenger the mandylion with the face of Christ. The mandylion per se expresses one of the fundamental teachings about the veneration of images, that "the resemblance to the prototypal image is conferred upon the material." Thus iconographic depictions of the mandylion show the face of Christ on a rich cloth.

In the West, a similar legend arose in the High Middle Ages about the cloth of Veronica: On the way to Golgotha, Christ pressed his face, bloodied by the crown of thorns, on the head cloth given to him by the saint. The imprint of his face remained on the cloth. That is the story of the *vera icon* (Latin for "true likeness"), from which the name Veronica is derived. The vera icon

20 Today the Turkish city of Urfa in northern Mesopotamia.

Left: The True Countenance of Christ, Moscow, late fourteenth century.
This icon influenced by Andrei Rublev is less formal than the Christ on Linen depictions of earlier centuries. The locks of hair are no longer symmetric and the mandylion, the hand cloth, is wrinkled. Nevertheless, the huge eyes in the thin face produce a particular sense of urgency.

Above: Mandylion, Russian, nineteenth century.
Christ's countenance on the smooth linen cloth is painted entirely in the traditional way. The angels at the right and left who hold the mandylion and let it hang down in orderly folds are a decorative addition of the 19th century.

corresponds in function and content to the Eastern mandylion. In contrast to the latter, however, the cloth of Veronica shows the crown of thorns as well as the wounds it created on Christ's forehead.

This type of religious realism, characteristic of Gothic art, is alien to the Christian East. In the East, the legend continues: Christ had a portrait of himself painted and sent it to the ailing king. According to the legend, the portrait was placed in a niche in the city wall of Edessa, above the city gate. During the occupation of the city by the archenemy of the kingdom, the "God-hating" Persians, the bishop of Edessa discovered the image and its imprint on a tile. This imprint became known as the *keramidion*, from the Greek word for tile, *keramis*. This account is older than the one about the mandylion.

The rendering of the Christ Not Made by Hands is practically identical in wall paintings and in icons; a free-floating head of Christ, that is, a head without a neck, looks straight ahead with large eyes staring sternly at the beholder. A few locks of hair may be seen on the high forehead. The hair is parted in the middle, and falls in locks or in two braids down each side of his head. The relatively short beard is parted in the middle. In general, great importance is attached to the symmetry of the parted hair and the beard. There is often a symmetrical cross behind his head. Even today the austere beauty of the Redeemer's countenance is fascinating to the beholder. Often the austerity is so intense that the image appears to be sinister or threatening.

Above: Christ Not Made by Hands, Moscow, beginning of the sixteenth century.
On this variant of the Savior with a Wet Beard, the halo extends a little over the frame at the left side, as Christ himself is looking to the left.

Above: The Savior with a Wet Beard, Novgorod School, fifteenth century.
As with all mandylion icons, the face of Christ is portrayed frontally. Broad, shaded eyes with huge pupils peer slightly to the left. The beard is a split goatee, and looks as if it had been shaped with a wet comb. This is the feature that earned this pictorial type the curious title of the Savior with a Wet Beard. Since they were dealing with a reproduction of the true countenance of Christ, not made by human hands, the artists could make only very small changes on the thousands of mandylion-pictures copied over and over since the sixth century.

"We acknowledge Thine ineffable divine
Providence over human life,
O unbounded Word of the Father,
And we venerate with a kiss
Thine image not made by hands,
But painted by God,
The victory-bringing image
Of Thy true humanity."

From a hymn for the sixteenth of August, the feast day of the icon Savior with Wet Beard.

Among the Christ Not Made by Hands icons, some are placed in a special group called the Savior with Wet Beard, because of the long beard pointing downward. This pictorial type is very rare, and, perhaps for that very reason, it is appropriate at this juncture to say a brief word about humor in icon painting. Humor is somewhat different from ridicule, which injures, and from irony, which is complex. Humor is kind, and above all, has an air of informality. For that reason, it plays a significant role even in the stories of the saints. At the same time, humor relaxes us, breaks the tension, when we are dealing with very weighty utterances that overwhelm our human power of understanding, such as the "Easter laughter"[21] in the Middle Ages. Finally, the geography of humor plays a role. The nickname "wet beard" is found only on icons from Novgorod, a trade city whose tavern and office witticisms were known and dreaded all over Russia.

21 In Latin, *risus paschalis.*

Left: Christ the Savior and Giver of Life, painted by Metropolitan John Zographus, 1393–1394.
This half-figure image of Christ, with the right hand raised in benediction and the left holding a magnificently bound Bible, corresponds formally to the Pantocrator iconography. By the inscription and a somewhat milder facial expression, this icon expresses not so much Christ's sovereignty over the universe as it does his redeeming concern for humanity.

Right: Christ the Merciful, mosaic icon, Byzantine, eleventh or twelfth century.
Christ's benign countenance, the hand of benediction turned toward his heart, and the soft blue-gray color of his robe radiate kindness and evoke in those praying before this image hope in God's mercy. Mosaic icons in smaller format, usually copies of the larger originals in apses, were especially intended for private use, or as portable icons in processions.

From the point of view of an art historian, both the form and the content of the Pantocrator type of icon encompass an extraordinarily broad range. Some icons, for instance, are known by a number of different titles (such as Christ the Savior, the Giver of Life, the Lover of Humanity), and are also called Christ the Benefactor, without deviating from the norm for the type. Orthodox believers, on the other hand, are most likely able to determine that a given icon is *their* Christ the Benefactor, whether it has a caption or not. Elusive elements such as the facial expression can be part of this identification process.

"We venerate Thy most pure image,
O Good One, and ask forgiveness of
our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Thy good will Thou wast pleased
to ascend the Cross in the flesh
and deliver Thy creatures from
bondage to the enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness
we cry aloud to Thee:
Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,
For Thou didst come to save the world."
The Troparion for the First Sunday of Lent

"Hail, thou
tabernacle of God the Word!
Hail, thou
saint greater than the saints!
Hail, thou
ark gilded by the Spirit!
Hail, thou
inexhaustible treasury of Life!
Hail, thou
glorious crown of pious kings!
Hail, thou
cherished boast of devoted priests!
Hail, thou
through whom we gain our victories!
Hail, thou
before whom our enemies fall prostrate!
Hail, thou
salvation of my soul!
Hail, thou
unwedded bride!"

From Ikos Twelve of the Akathist Hymn

Left: Christ the High Priest, Novgorod School, sixteenth century.
Wearing the liturgical vestments of a bishop and with a crown on his head, Christ sits on an ornately decorated throne. As is customary in portrayals of the deësis, Mary and John the Forerunner are turned sideways facing Jesus. John is clothed in his traditional animal skins, and the Mother of God wears a royal robe matching her crown.

Right: Christ the King of Kings, Cretan, seventeenth century.
Christ sits on a splendid rose-colored marble throne inlaid with black. As King of Kings, he wears the garb of a high priest, with a splendid crown on his head. He is blessing the faithful. The Gospel book is open to Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavily burdened, and I will refresh you."

Depictions of Christ as High Priest in the Temple of Jerusalem are very rare, and are never seen on icons. However, starting in the fourteenth century, an image appeared in icon painting that enjoyed increasing popularity, a three-figured composition[22] showing Christ in the full liturgical garb of a bishop or archbishop flanked by the Mother of God and John the Forerunner (as the Baptist is called in the Eastern Church), thus constituting a form of the deësis. The Mother of God is sometimes presented as a young bride; most frequently, however, she is depicted as a mature woman with a dark maphorion. This composition spread from the Balkans to the entire sphere of Eastern Orthodoxy. It is based on Psalm 45:9b, "At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir."

The icon showing Christ in the vestments of a bishop attempts to express the message of the Church, whose *mysterium* is based on the Word of God become flesh in the womb of the Mother of God. The Mother of God may sometimes be shown as a young bride, but Christ is never depicted as Bridegroom. He appears as Lord of the Church (and as Lord of Mary) in the form of a bishop, just as a bishop of the Eastern Church has the title "Master."[23] The mystery of Mary as bride, as a sign and symbol of the Church living under its Lord, was expressed in one of the most beautiful Marian praises, the Akathist Hymn.

22 In Greek, *trimorphon.*
23 In Greek, *despotes*; in Russian, *vladika.*

Left: Christ Pantocrator, painter working for Archbishop Constantine in Ochrid, 1262–1263.
On this 135cm x 73cm wooden icon, Christ is shown in half-figure as Pantocrator. His grave countenance, from which large, dark-circled eyes look directly at the viewer, is framed by well-groomed black hair and beard. The red cross in the halo alludes to the Passion of the Son of God. Over the luminous undergarment with its dark ornamentation, the clear blue of his *himation* is elegant, tempering the austerity emanating from the majestic Pantocrator figure.

Right: Christ the Savior of Souls, Constantinople (?), beginning of the fourteenth century. This icon, probably painted in Constantinople, was brought to Ochrid at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The reserved features of the face, well-groomed hair, noble fingers, and, last but not least, the harmonious colors ranging from deep red to soft green, betray the hand of a Byzantine master. The florid silver-plated mounting and Greek inscription, *Christos Psychosoter* (Savior of Souls), date from the time of its creation. On the three intact sides of the frame (the bottom side has been destroyed) we see bust reliefs of the apostles. This, together with a portrayal of the Crucifixion, was originally part of a two-sided processional icon.

Because of the variety, the Pantocrator-type icon is a flexible spiritual aid for the devout viewer—today it would be described as "multifunctional." On the sumptuous silver overlay of the famous icon of Ochrid (from the beginning of the fourteenth century) is the inscription, *Psychosoter*, that is, the Savior of Souls. Painted entirely in the late Byzantine style, this icon shows the classic portrait of Christ in bust form, a short beard, hair parted in the middle and combed back, right hand raised in benediction, left hand holding a closed Bible. The expression of this Christ is something between stern and gentle. "The Son of Man did not come to destroy human lives, but to save them,"[24] a pledge of Jesus that would be fulfilled at the end of the fourteenth century, when the Osmanli Turks conquered Ochrid along with the rest of Macedonia. Only God knows how many quick prayers were said before this icon during Turkish domination.

"For who hath come to Thee crying, who was not saved forthwith? Who hast not called to Thee from the depths, and hast not been heard straight-away? Yea, Thou hast shown Thyself, O Lord, to be quick to save all who call upon Thee, Thou, in grace unconquerable."
(From an Orthodox Prayerbook)

24 Luke 9:56. This sentence is recorded in only some of the ancient manuscripts.

From left to right:
The Savior with the Wrathful Eye, Moscow School, sixteenth century.
The Savior with the Wrathful Eye, Russian, second half of the sixteenth century.
The Savior with the Wrathful Eye, Moscow, middle of the fourteenth century.

"I have recklessly forgotten
Thy glory, O Father;
And among sinners I have scattered
the riches which Thou gavest me.
And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal:
I have sinned before Thee,
O merciful father;
Receive me, a penitent, and make me
as one of Thy hired servants."

The Kontakion of the Third Sunday before Lent,
The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Savior with the Wrathful Eye icons (or Christ the Fierce Eye) were known in southern Slavic regions from the tenth century, but in Russia only from the fourteenth century. These pictures show only the head and neck of Christ with stern, piercing eyes focused on the viewer, as though to move the faithful to understanding and repentance for sins.

This Pantocrator-type icon is a wonderful illustration of the frequently ardent relationships between an icon and its beholder, seen already in the Christ Not Made by Hands. Particularly austere depictions of the Savior in Byzantine wall and icon painting led to the nickname The Wrathful Eye, appearing first in the Slavic Balkan regions and soon afterward in Russia from the fourteenth century; the nickname recalls Mark 3:5, "And Jesus looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart." The Russian word for "angry" *(yary)* encompasses a whole spectrum of feelings, ranging from "furious" or "angry" to "swift" and "courageous." The best translation would be Christ of the Penetrating Gaze.

Ангелъ
Пресвятая
Предтеча
Ангелъ
Ангелъ
Ангелъ

In Greece when two friends were going to be separated for a long period of time, they used to break a ring or some other object, so that they could put the pieces back together again (in Greek, *symballein*) when they were reunited. As a saying goes, "Everything that is separated will one day be reunited." This a way of saying that an inner reality, in this case friendship, is expressed outwardly by the breaking and reuniting of the parts of an object. The Eastern Church of today regards the Creed as a *symbolon*, because it reflects the spiritual reality of faith. Even in antiquity a legal document was referred to as a symbolon, because it was a material documentation of moral obligations. Stated briefly, a symbol is the tangible representation of an intangible reality. The words "emblem," "characteristic," and "sign" do not capture the original meaning of "symbol." Signs (such as traffic signs) are established for a specific purpose and for a limited period of time. Symbols, on the other hand, have a permanent, perhaps even eternal, quality. They help us find our way in the infinite realm of the spirit. Living by symbols implies daily attention to their messages.

Symbolic representations of Christ in which some other quality or epithet is associated intellectually and spiritually with Christ, the Existing One,[24a] are: Immanuel, the Unsleeping Eye, the Lamb of God, the Angel of Great Counsel, and also, if only in a limited way, the representation of the Trinity. It is always fascinating how the devout imagination, tempered and informed by prayer and liturgy, unveiled ever new insights about the dogma of Christ, in itself anything but simple.

"Rejoice, O Isaiah, singing in choir:
The Virgin hath in her womb
and then didst bare the son, Immanuel,
God and Man,
'Beginning' is his name.
In that we magnify him,
we sing the Virgin's praise."
From the Hymns for the Nativity of Christ

24a Editor's note. This is the usual, but poor, translation of the Greek words Ο ΩΝ that appear in the nimbus around the head of Christ in icons. These words are the Greek translation of YHWH, the Hebrew name for God, frequently rendered as "I Am" in English.

Above: The Mother of God of the Sign, Transylvanian, eighteenth century.
Mary, standing in the orans posture with raised hands, is shown with the pre-existent Son of God at her bosom in a medallion. He is depicted as a youth, but with the head of an adult, and his right hand is raised in blessing.

Page 132: Christ the Holy Silence, Russian, nineteenth century.
This representational form of Christ as a beautiful young angel with arms crossed and with a two-colored, eight-sided star in the aureole stems from a miniature in a fourteenth century manuscript in Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai *(Codex grecae 339).* The figure is a reference to Isaiah 42:1–2, "I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or shout, or make his voice heard in the street." Christ as the Holy Silence was seldom depicted in the eighteenth century, more frequently in the nineteenth century, although then almost exclusively in Russia.

Above: Christ Immanuel with Angels, School of Vladimir-Suzdal, around 1190.
The youthful Immanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us") is characterized by a high forehead indicating wisdom.

Right: Christ Immanuel, Simon Ushakov, 1697.
In this small icon (only 37cm x 32cm) the wise countenance of the pre-existent Immanuel looks as though he is hypnotizing the beholder; the right eye peers slightly towards the left, while the left eye is focused straight ahead.

Above: Christ Immanuel, end of the seventeenth century.
The head of Immanuel, with curved forehead and wise eyes, appears even more impressive with a metallic halo and a richly decorated silver collar, the Sata, to frame and enhance his countenance.

The depiction of this image of Christ is based on Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall be with child and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel." Iconography of Immanuel had the task of portraying the Word of God in its pre-existence, his eternal being before the Incarnation, as well as in his existence after the Incarnation. Immanuel in the lap or on the arm of the Mother of God was a kind of proclamation of the completed Incarnation. For that reason there was a certain reluctance in early Byzantine art to depict him as a child; rather he was shown as similar to the Ancient of Days. In icon painting he is portrayed as a boy, but often with the characteristics of an old man, following the ancient and extra-biblical prototype of the "childlike old man" *(paidariogeron)*. The rounded, projecting forehead and the somber eyes of an adult are particularly characteristic.

Immanuel alone, often in a rounded shield[25] or medallion, plays an important role in the iconography of certain Mother of God images, as a symbol of the Incarnation of the eternal Word of God. The Immanuel theme is limited to the artistic domain of the Eastern Church and its spheres of influence.

25 In Latin, *clipeus*.

"Thou hast borne us a little child,
the Ancient of Days,
who hast shown new ways on earth,
and hast renewed the fallen creation,
Thou unwedded and blessed one."

From the Marian Hymns of the Octoechos for the Feast of the Annunciation

This portrayal is based on Daniel 7:9, "As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire." The portrayal of God the Father was forbidden in the Eastern Church. Most probably this Ancient of Days depiction, which is to be found only in the Eastern Church, originated somewhere near the border to the West, where they were not inhibited about pictures of God the Father. Western and Eastern ideas were often exchanged in border regions such as the Balkans with their western coasts, and North Russia, especially Novgorod. In icon painting the Ancient of Days is never seen individually; he is usually used in the metaphorical depiction of the Trinity. God the Father holds in his bosom the Son of God, who himself holds a dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit; this composition is called "Fatherhood."[26] He also appears less often on pictures associated with the Incarnation of God in Christ.

26 In Latin, *paternitas*; in Russian, *otechestvo*.

Above left: The Cosmic Christ, Immanuel icon, encaustic, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, seventh century.
The countenance of Christ is a white-haired old man, alluding to the Ancient of Days.

Below left: The Holy Trinity, Nikifor Savin, sixteenth or seventeenth century.
This icon painted on canvas shows God the Father. On his lap we see Christ Immanuel with the dove of the Holy Spirit hovering over him.

Above: The Trinity, Russian, seventeenth century.
God the Father holds on his knees the child-like figure of Immanuel, who in turn holds in his hands a medallion with the image of a dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Above: The Unsleeping Eye, Moscow School, beginning of the sixteenth century.
In a rocky landscape with trees and birds, the youthful Christ has stretched out to rest. Mary holds her hand lovingly over his head. On his other side, the Archangel Michael bends over to his Lord with a cross in his hands. This depiction goes back to a twelfth century miniature in Codex 45 of the Stravonikita Monastery on Mount Athos.

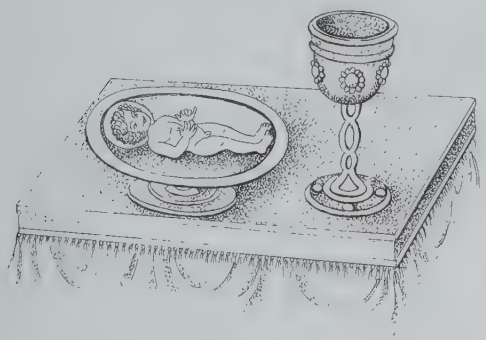
Above: The Unsleeping Eye, Moscow, sixteenth century.
Jesus is lying on an elliptical couch made of branches and twigs; an angel hovers above him. To his left and right Mary and the Archangel Michael, who is holding a cross, watch protectively over the Son of God at rest. This motif is called *anapeson* in Greek, the One Sunk Down (that is, in the sleep of death), or in Russian, The Unsleeping Eye. In Russia it is also common to title this icon The Guardian of Israel Who Sleeps Not (cf. Psalm 121:4).

"Thou hast slept in the tomb,
O Christ, a life-giving sleep,
By which Thou hast awakened
all the human race
From the heavy slumber of sin."
From the Praises at the Matins of Holy Saturday

Unsleeping Eye" *(nedremannoe oko)* is the Russian designation for this depiction of Christ, which is called *anapeson* in Greek, the One Sunk Down. It shows a youthful or even boyish Christ (of the Immanuel type) in elegant raiment, sunken down onto a couch. Bending over him are the Mother of God and the Archangel Michael. Often the Ancient of Days is shown at the upper border in a circular segment. The whole scene appears in a paradiselike landscape—less frequently it is set in a room. Icon painters took their ideas for this composition from biblical and non-biblical texts, with the intention of creating a visual synopsis of all the salvation actions that took place in and through Christ, crowned by his sacrificial death. An example of one of the texts the painters used is Genesis 49:9, "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness—who dares rouse him up?" The prey was understood as death, which has been conquered by Christ's descent into the underworld. Another example is Psalm 121:4, "He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." The early Christian work on natural science, a bestiary called the *Physiologos*, compares Christ to a lion, whose eyes were thought to remain open during sleep, and whose offspring, though they be born dead, will be raised to life on the third day.

This composition deals with the visual rendering of a particularly solemn moment that takes place behind the iconostasis during the Proskimidia.[27] In accordance with the Gospel account, the priest takes a loaf of leavened eucharistic bread[28] and thrusts a small liturgical spear into it in a prescribed sequence, removing particles of bread and placing them on the paten in an established order: Christ, Mother of God, John the Forerunner, prophets, apostles, saints, and church hierarchy. A deacon mixes water and wine in the Eucharistic chalice, as he recites John 19:34–35, "One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth."

Unlike the liturgical rite described above, which can be traced to the early Byzantine era, the iconographic rendering depicting a small child lying on a paten cannot be authenticated before the thirteenth century, and then only in murals in the altar, behind the iconostasis. Here it is liturgically legitimate. Because it was hidden from view



of the congregation and veiled in mystery, it is rarely found on icons. It is linked with the legend of the Grail and with a range of miracles revolving around the eucharistic bread and wine (miraculously bleeding eucharistic hosts). Nevertheless, very early icons at Mount Sinai show the dead Christ on the cross with Mary catching in a vial the blood that flowed from his wounded side.

27 Editor's Note: The Liturgy of the Preparation of the Holy Gifts.

28 As opposed to the unleavened hosts most commonly used at the Western Eucharist.

29 In Greek *melizein,* after which this pictorial type, Melismos, is named.

30 Called a *diskos* in Greek.

Above: The Lamb of God (also known as the Fraction), painted on silk, Russia, presumably eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.
The Fraction refers to the host, which is broken[29] for the reception of the Eucharist. The representation of the naked Child Jesus on the paten is also designated *Amnos,* Greek for "lamb." Although the lamb as a symbol for Christ, who sacrificed himself for humankind, was widespread from the fourth century, the visual motif of the child Jesus lying on a paten[30] is first found on a fresco painted shortly before 1200 in the Church of Saint Nicholas in Melnik, Bulgaria. On a circular picture, 126cm in diameter, angels waving liturgical fans adore the Christ Child lying on a paten.

Left: The Lamb of God *(Amnos),* Russian.
A seraph has placed the paten with the Christ Child on the altar, next to which two angels with liturgical fans in their hands adore the Lamb of God. The liturgy of the Eastern Church has referred to the consecrated host as the Lamb of God since the sixth century. Iconographic evidence of this exists from the seventeenth century, but the motif itself is seldom seen.

Left: The Holy Silence, eighteenth or nineteenth century.
Fitted out with large wings, with rows of feathers gradually getting darker, Christ stands before us with his arms crossed, absorbed in silence. His halo is adorned with an eight-pointed star; the two colors of the points suggest his divine and human nature.

Right: The Angel of Great Counsel, Fresco, Ochrid, 1294/95.
We recognize this beautiful angel as Christ by the cruciform nimbus and the scars on his hands and feet. Icons with the theme of the crucified Christ-Angel appeared in response to the heresy of the Bogomils, who saw in Christ only an angel, denying his humanity and his suffering.

This portrayal shows a youthful angel, quite beautiful, with hair falling to his shoulders and scars on his hands and feet. These characteristics, together with the cruciform nimbus and the abbreviated inscription in iconographic shorthand, identify him as the Angel of Great Counsel. In his right hand he holds a scepter and, in his left, a partially unrolled scroll[31] with a Greek inscription that reads, "Today the redemption of the universe has appeared, the visible as well as the invisible." The building blocks for this composition, which emerged in the Balkans in the thirteenth century, include the messianic prophecy in Isaiah 9:6, which in the Greek Bible adds, "Angel of Great Counsel" to the other well-known titles of honor; and Malachi 3:1, "See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to the temple, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight. Indeed, he is coming says the Lord of hosts."

Another Christ as Angel portrayal on icons is the Holy Silence, a youthful Christ portrayed as an angel with arms crossed over his chest, behind his head a seven- or eight-pointed star or a cruciform nimbus. This late composition is based on biblical passages like Psalm 141:3, "Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips," or Isaiah 53:7, which refers to God's Suffering Servant as follows, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent." This icon enjoyed widespread popularity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in Russia, when pious Orthodox Christians had revived the ancient Jesus-Prayer, which was silently and contemplatively prayed in continuous repetition, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner." It was popular in the same way the rosary was popular in the West.

The Crucified Seraph (also called the Soul of Christ) is a complicated, more or less allegorical depiction: As in its Western prototype, the Throne of Grace, God the Father in episcopal garb holds the hanging crucified Christ. Christ's body, except for his arms and legs, is covered by the wings of a white seraph. In the background, we almost always see a rhombus poised on one of its points, encompassing the figures. Behind it is a rectangle, always red and stretched out at the corners, where angels may appear. This uncommon composition came from the West in the sixteenth cen-

31 In Latin, a *rotulus*.

Left: The Crucified Seraph, Moscow School, around 1600.
Laid over a red concave rectangle is a greenish rhombus, the lower point of which is set in Mount Calvary; the skull of Adam is visible. In the middle of the picture, Christ hangs on the Cross. Only the head and scarred hands and feet are visible; the rest of the Crucified is concealed by a seraph. The red man with a crown and sword above the seraph is the personification of the Wisdom of God with the sword of the Spirit. At the very top is Christ as High Priest wearing episcopal vestments. Above his head are the rays of the Holy Spirit.

Right: Christ in Glory, Coptic, nineteenth century.
Clothed in magnificent robes and wearing a crownlike headpiece, Christ sits on the throne prepared for him by his Father in heaven. The cross of his suffering is now the scepter of his majesty and sovereignty over heaven and earth. The square shape of the wings and throne, the stocky appearance of Christ, and the ornamental arrangement of the fringe of his cape are typical for the Coptic peasant style of painting.

tury via Novgorod and Pskov to central Russia.

Earlier research suggesting that this motif was evidence of Franciscan piety has recently been confirmed. Mention is made in the biographies of St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) of a vision that corresponds to our icon. "Finally," the account goes, "the Friend of Christ discerned that it would not be through bodily martyrdom, but through the transforming fire of the Spirit that he would be conformed to the crucified Christ." This vision of Saint Francis leads us to the climax of the Catholic Mass as to that of the Orthodox Eucharist: Before the transformation of the holy gifts through the priest we hear the Sanctus, a two-part hymn taken from Isaiah and Matthew.

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory:
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he that cometh
in the Name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!"
Isaiah 6:3 and Matthew 21:9

"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne
high and lofty;
and the hem of his robe filled the temple.
Seraphs were in attendance above him;
each had six wings:
with two they covered their faces,
and with two they covered their feet,
and with two they flew."
Isaiah 6:1–2

"Cause of all and Giver of Life, the
infinite Wisdom of God
Has built a house from a pure
unwedded mother.
For clothed in the temple of His body,
'Gloriously has Christ our God
been glorified!'
Initiating His friends into the mystery,
The true Wisdom of God has set a
table that nourishes the soul,
And has mixed a cup of immortality
for the faithful.
Let us draw near in reverence
and cry out:
'Gloriously has Christ our God
been glorified!'
Let us the faithful all listen
As the uncreated and innate Wisdom
of God calls out with a loud voice.
Taste, and knowing that I am God,
exclaim:
'Gloriously has Christ our God
been glorified!'"

From the First Ode of the Canon for the Matins of Maundy Thursday

Above: The Wisdom of God with Mary and John the Forerunner, Russia, eighteenth century.
A woman clothed in royal garments with crown and scepter sits on a throne as the personification of the wisdom of God; on her right is Mary as orant, with the Child Jesus hovering in front of her, and on her left John the Forerunner. The robe of Wisdom is red. Her wings reach above the clouds, where angels on the right and left touch the tips of her wings (hands hidden).

Page 141: The Wisdom of God, Tver (?), fifteenth century.
Sitting on a throne supported by small pillars, the figure of the Wisdom of God holds a scroll in her hand. With folded red wings she hovers in a large gloriole in front of an eight-pointed star. In the center of the arch above her, Christ looks out from a gloriole. Above the arch, we see the *hetoimasia,* the Judgment Seat of Christ, flanked by three angels on either side.

The concept of the Wisdom of God, (in Greek, *sophia*) plays an important role in the Eastern Church and its spiritual culture. "Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table. She has sent out her servant-girls; she calls from the heights out over the city, 'You who are simple, turn in here!'" (Proverbs 9:1–4). This Eastern intellectual and spiritual concept was expressed in cathedrals dedicated to Sophia in Constantinople, Kiev, Novgorod, and elsewhere.

It was not just Wisdom's invitation to the banquet[32] of knowledge in her house of seven pillars that was important for the visual arts of the East. According to Proverbs 8:22–31, Wisdom was with God as his favorite on each day of creation, "I played there on the surface of the earth, and my delight was to be with humankind."

The New Testament transferred these glorious visions to Christ, whom Paul called "the power of God and the wisdom of God."[33] Sermons, scriptural exegeses, and the hymns of the Church Fathers all contributed to make Christ, as the incarnate "Wisdom of God," a popular subject of wall painting and icons.

Last but not least, Wisdom also became a symbolic figure of church doctrine, particularly in grappling with heresies that held that at the Incarnation Christ had become nothing but an angel.

32 Reminiscent of Plato's *Symposium.*
33 I Cor. 1:24.

Ѻтецъ софіи премудрости Бжіи

The visit to Abraham at Mamre by "three men" as recorded in the Bible (Genesis 18:2), which many of the early Fathers of the Church saw as an obscure reference to the triune nature of God, is interpreted by the Eastern Orthodox Church as a type of the Holy Trinity. While the Western Church has celebrated a separate Feast of the Holy Trinity on the Sunday after Pentecost since the High Middle Ages, the appearance of the three angels to Abraham is commemorated by the Eastern Church on Pentecost Sunday as a symbol of the triune God.

Left: The Old Testament Trinity, Detail of the mosaic in the lunette of the north wall of the apse in San Vitale, Ravenna, second quarter of the sixth century.
According to the biblical narrative in Genesis 18, Abraham received a visit from "three men," to whom he shows hospitality under the oak tree at Mamre.

Center: The Trinity, Serbian, sixteenth century. The angel at the left, made prominent by a light-colored garment, receives the nods of the other two angels. The angel at the right puts his hand into the single chalicelike bowl. The scene is a beautiful symbolic image, complete in itself, of the eucharistic meal.

Right: The Trinity, Greek, sixteenth century. Three angels sit at three sides of a table set with food, under what looks like a baldachin. Their halos and the background shimmer with mystical gold.

The Trinity[34] (a being whose unity is constituted of or manifested in "threeness"), the fundamental Christian doctrine, is the unity of the three divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This teaching is common to all Christian confessions and distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. Controversies concerning this doctrine in the second and third centuries found temporary closure in the Nicene Creed of 325 and in the "Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed" of 381. The fact that disputes concerning this doctrine broke out again and again over the centuries should not be seen as a completely negative development. Rather it shows clearly that the Trinity is not a dead issue, but rather something of deep concern to humans as thinking beings. Above all, these conflicts show that theological speculation about the Trinity had a great deal to do with the religious identity of the believing Christian. In the discovery of this identity, the artistic portrayal of the Trinity plays a role that should not be underestimated.

Apart from references to signs and symbols, depictions of the mystery of the Trinity may be divided into two groups: the angel model and the human model. The first group is based on Genesis 18, a meticulously detailed narrative about the visit of three men to Abraham and Sarah in the grove of Mamre. Even the early Christian exegetes agreed that in this event they were dealing with an appearance of the Trinity. For that reason, the three young men were distinguished by halos to signify their heavenly origin. Somewhat later they were also shown with wings, characterizing them as divinely commissioned messengers.[35] This poignant scene of almost familial intimacy was called "the Hospitality."[36] This hospitality is offered not only by Abraham and Sarah to the three heavenly ambassadors or angels, but conversely also extended by the three to Abraham and Sarah, and with them to all humanity. In this way this event came to suggest the eucharistic meal. The table of hospitality became the table of the Eucharist, the altar. The table is no longer filled with dining utensils, but solely with the eucharistic paten and, on it, the head of the Lamb. This is how the mystery of the Trinity is shown on the *Troitsa* of Andrei Rublev—as a silent conversation of the three persons about their decree of re-

Above: The Hospitality of Abraham, Byzantine, end of the fourteenth century.
The wide format of the icon allows for the inclusion of Abraham and Sarah in the scene along with the heavenly guests. The dark garments of the former stand in clear contrast to the bright red robes of the angels. The table has been set with a sumptuous feast; Abraham and Sarah, contrary to biblical narrative, carry more dishes to the table. The architectural backdrop on the left and right creates the atmosphere of a room, lending particular charm to this icon.

Below left: Troitsa (Trinity), Andrei Rublev, 1411.
With heads turned toward each other, the three holy angels are sitting around the table, as if in silent conversation. No utensils are seen on the table, just a chalice. There are no embellishments in this image. The gentle curve of the silhouettes of the figures, the threefold colors of the nearly transparent robes, the inclination of the heads of the angels at the right and center towards the heavenly figure sitting at the left, all convey consummate harmony and unfathomable depth. Consequently, this Rublev icon came to be regarded as the most perfect portrayal of the Trinity. Small wonder that it was always considered the ideal worthy of imitation.

Above: The Holy Trinity, Russian, seventeenth century.
Filling the whole space of the inner scene we see Abraham's guests, the three angels, in front of the oak tree at Mamre, sitting around a table set with food. On the outside, framing this scene and in a smaller format, we see the Angel of the Annunciation on the left, and Anna, the mother of Mary, on the right.

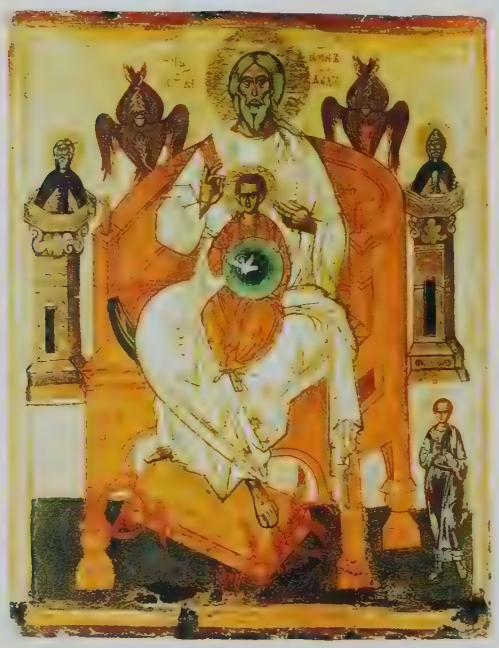
In the first Christian centuries, it was completely out of the question to portray God visually. As Christians gradually awoke to the realization that Jesus Christ in his human nature could indeed be depicted, however, they began to produce images of God the Father with God the Son and, in the form of a dove, God the Holy Spirit.

Left: Fatherhood, Novgorod School, fourteenth century.
Sitting on a throne with seraphim hovering over the back, God the Father holds the preexistent child Jesus on his lap, who in turn holds in his hands a medallion with the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Middle: The Trinity, Cretan, sixteenth century.
God the Father wearing a light-colored garment and Christ in a dark garment sit next to each other on a benchlike throne. Above them in the center hovers the dove of the Holy Spirit.

Right: The Trinity, miniature, around 1150.
Christ hanging on the Cross is shown between the knees of God the Father, who is sitting on what is the hint of a throne. The dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above.

Right below: The Trinity, Balkans (?), around 1800.
Here we see the Trinity portrayed as a three-faced Christ with six arms, a rare, rather monstrous depiction.



demption, which will be accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ on Golgotha. The viewer of the icon becomes a participant in the "trialogue."

The human model of the Trinity is based on the incarnation of God in Christ, as the term itself implies. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."[37] It was the task of the painter to depict this "human patterning" not too graphically, but rather "from a distance." For this purpose legitimate and yet understandable prototypes were gleaned from biblical texts. God the Father appeared as the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9, "As I watched thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head was like pure wool; and his throne was fiery flames, with wheels of burning fire." The representation of the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, was based on Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall be with child and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel," and Isaiah 9:6, "For a child has been born for us, a son is given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The icon painters depicted the Immanuel as a boy or a youth, and often put a great deal of love into their portrayal of him. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, has always been rendered symbolically in Christian art as a dove and easily incorporated into this human-patterned Trinity.

Two basic paradigms emerged for depicting all three of the divine Persons together. First, there is the co-inhering type, also called the Fatherhood. God the Father as the Ancient of Days has God the Son as Immanuel sitting on his lap, holding a round plate with a dark center, out of which flies a dove, God the Holy Spirit. Second, there is the juxtaposed type. Two of the Persons of the Trinity sit next to each other,

Left: The Trinity, Serbian, sixteenth century. God the Father, with snow-white hair and robe, sits on a cushioned throne, a rhomboid figure in front of his halo. To his right sits Christ with a cruciform nimbus as God the Son, shown in the Pantocrator pose. At the same level as their heads, the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers between them, visually emphasizing the equality of the three divine Persons.

Above: The Holy Trinity with Angels and Saints, Russian, nineteenth century.
The globe of the world, into which a cross and spear have been thrust, is suspended in a golden aureole between God the Father and Christ raised into heaven. Above them in a separate, smaller aureole we see the dove of the Holy Spirit. Underneath the globe of the world are a shining red seraph and flaming wheels of fire, a motif from Daniel 7:9, "His throne was fiery flames, with wheels of burning fire." Mary and John the Forerunner stand on either side of the gloriole, which is surrounded by adoring angels. Behind the entire scene is a cloth curving inward, fastened at four corners with symbols of the four evangelists.

and the dove hovers between them; often God the Father and God the Son lean their heads toward each other to suggest the silent conversation already mentioned above. A depiction of the Trinity that is not an icon, but rather a devotional picture in the Western sense, is the "Throne of Grace," a term stemming from Martin Luther. This picture shows God the Father holding the crucified Son in his arms. This theme is still alien to the iconography of the Eastern Church.

In conclusion, we briefly mention the three-headed image of the Trinity, which appeared occasionally in the eighteenth century. It was ridiculed as a monstrosity in the West toward the end of the Middle Ages, and it never become popular in the Orthodox East.

34 In Greek *trias*; in Russian, *troitsa*.
35 In Greek, *angelos*.
36 In Greek, *philoxenia*; in Russian, *gostepriimstvo*.
37 John 1:14.

"All of creation rejoices in you,
O Full of Grace...
the assembly of angels
and the race of men."
The Liturgy of Saint Basil

Kilian Kirchhoff, a distinguished authority on the spirituality of the Eastern Church, spoke of the "overwhelming, if at the same time uplifting, wealth and colorful variety of Marian poetry of the Byzantine liturgy, which distinguishes it from other liturgies, even from those of other Churches of the East." A decided degree of poetic restraint in the hymns addressed to the Theotokos[38] preserved them from the extravagant language and thinly-disguised eroticism of late medieval Marian hymnody in the West. What is true for Orthodox liturgical poetry is also true of the portrayal of the Mother of God in icon painting.

Evidence from both hymnody and the visual arts suggests that a veneration of the mother of Jesus Christ began as early as the third century and probably even earlier. This fact should be viewed in both a broader and a narrower context. The broader context consists of the plethora of Eastern mother-goddess cults, which influenced Hellenistic Greek culture and even the Roman Empire, to an extent that nearly boggles the modern mind. The veneration of the Mother of God nevertheless defeated these powerful cults in a struggle that lasted for centuries. It is necessary to know this to avoid the erroneous impression that the image of the Mother of God in East and West developed in a setting free of conflict. Anyone who neglects to study the history of the portrayal of Christ and Mary does not take this subject seriously enough and is in danger of reducing it to the status of a fanciful myth.

As with the images of Christ, we also divide the Marian icons into two groups: scenes from the life of the Mother of God and separate, or autonomous, portrayals. The number of distinct images in this second group is so prodigious that only a rough classification is possible. There is a very natural reason for this: Through her son, the Son of Man, Mary became, not only the Mother of God, but also the Mother of humankind. Thus, regardless of denominational boundaries, it is impossible to imagine Christ without his mother.

And so Mary became the patroness of innumerable monasteries, cities, churches, streets and squares, geographical areas, lakes and rivers, associations of craftsmen and merchant guilds, societies and organizations of girls and women and boys and men, of civilians and soldiers, all of whom invoked her as their patroness. Christ is obliged to his mother for his humanity, and for that we, too, are in debt to the one who is both his mother and our mother. She is the Mother of Sorrows with regard to the passion of her son as well as to the suffering of all humanity, the Joy of All Who Suffer, as one of her icons is called. "Thou art perpetually compassionate, for Thou alone hast conceived the most loving and gracious Lord," as John of Damascus (d. c. 750) wrote in a Marian hymn; or, in another, "Thou art a compassionate heart and Thy mercy hath no end; heal Thou the suffering, the wounds and bruises: the anguish and agony of the body, O Lady, that we might worthily praise Thee."

38 These hymns are called *theotokia* in Greek, from the word *Theotokos*, "God-bearer," the most usual of the Orthodox titles for Mary, the Mother of God.

Page 146: The Nativity of the Mother of God with bordering scenes from her life, Russian, third quarter of the sixteenth century.
The center section of the icon is divided into three levels, the topmost level showing the annunciation to Anna and Joachim, then the birth of Mary, and at the lowest level the preparation of the bath for the newborn and the rocking cradle. See enlargement for detail of the last scene. The sixteen scenes around the border, most of which are recorded in the apocryphal *Proto-gospel of James,* depict the life of Mary.
From upper left to lower right: 1. Joachim and Anna bring Offerings to the High Priest; 2. Rejection of the Offerings; 3. The Annunciation to Joachim; 4. The Annunciation to Anna; 5. Joachim and Anna meet at the Golden Gate; 6. Joachim brings Mary to the High Priest for Naming; 7. The first seven steps of Mary; 8. The Entry of Mary into the Temple; 9. The Prayer of the High Priest at the Staff of Joseph; 10. The High Priest Zachariah brings Mary and Joseph together; 11. The Annunciation at the Well; 12. Mary's Prayer in the Desert; 13. Forewarning of Death; 14. Preparation for the Dormition; 15. Dormition of the Mother of God; 16. Assumption of Mary.
This iconography of the life of Mary corresponds by and large with later Byzantine tradition—it is found on an eleventh-century fresco in the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom in Kiev, and enjoyed great popularity in Russia from the fourteenth century.

"Your Nativity, O Virgin,
Has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!
The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,
Has shone from you, O Theotokos!
By annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.
By destroying death,
He has granted us eternal life."
Troparion for the Nativity of the Theotokos

Left: Nativity of the Mother of God, Moscow School, fifteenth century.
Propped up by a cushion for her back, Saint Anna sits upright in her bed and looks on as the midwives bathe the little Mary. The half-figures at the top are probably saints who were particularly venerated by the person who commissioned this icon (presumably George, Nicholas, Peter, and Demetrius).

Right: Birth of the Mother of God, Russian, seventeenth century.
Saint Anna rests on a couch placed diagonally at the center of the picture, while maidservants wait on her. She looks toward the bottom edge of the picture, where two women prepare a bath for the newborn. Saint Joachim sits with the Bible, elevated on a throne, and looks straight ahead out of the picture directly at the beholder.

The origins of the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God on September eighth go back to the sixth or seventh century, although it was not officially included in the liturgical calendar until the ninth century. In the Gospels, only Luke (1:27) refers to the fact that Mary stems from the House of David. In the extra-biblical (apocryphal) narratives, the birth of Mary is mentioned in detail. At the center of these narratives is the answer to the prayer of the childless couple, Joachim and Anna; the childhood and youth of the future Mother of God are likewise embellished with numerous miraculous events. Like all birth portrayals, iconography conforms to classic models of the delivery room milieu: Saint Anna is shown lying on the delivery bed with women from the neighborhood bringing nourishment and midwives bathing the child. Sometimes Saint Joachim can be seen peering through a doorway. Abstract architectural backdrops suggest an interior. On later icons, they are replaced by rooms with contemporary furnishings, so that the viewer was able to witness this scene almost as if it were in his or her own home. The birth of the Mother of God is the festive yet solemn prelude to God's saving action in Christ.

THE ENTRY OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE

Left: The Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, Icon of the Consecration of the Church at the Hilandar Monastery, fourteenth century. This icon was probably on the iconostasis of the church of King Milutin. Standing under a baldachin, the High Priest Zachariah receives the child Mary from her parents, Joachim and Anna, who are followed by virgins carrying candles. Above to the right, we see Mary as a temple virgin being given nourishment by the angel Gabriel.

Above: The Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, Greek, seventeenth century. Anna and Joachim, both with halos, have brought three-year-old Mary to the Temple. An attendant leads her to the High Priest Zachariah, who stands at a higher level. Temple virgins observe the scene. Mary sits at the top of a steep stairway receiving nourishment from the Archangel Gabriel.

Joachim and Anna had vowed to present their daughter, Mary, in the temple at the tender age of three as one of the temple virgins, a story found in two apocryphal books. The Emperor Justinian endowed a church dedicated to Mary in Jerusalem on November 20, 543. The feast day itself, November 21, does not appear in the Orthodox liturgical calendars until the middle of the twelfth century. Portrayals of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple gained gradual acceptance after the Iconoclastic Controversy in the ninth century, and were popular in the High Middle Ages. Even today, as an event in God's plan of salvation, the icon of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple maintains a secure place in the festal tier of the iconostasis. This icon portrays the scene in which the High Priest receives Mary in the presence of her parents and sometimes also of astounded observers. The Archangel Gabriel is always depicted flying to the scene to give nourishment to the childlike Mary, seated on an elevated throne.

"After thy birth, O Lady and Bride of God,
Thou hast gone to dwell in the temple of
the Lord, there to be brought up in the
Holy of Holies, for thou art thyself holy:
And Gabriel then was sent to thee,
O Virgin all-undefiled, to bring thee food.
All the powers of heaven stood amazed,
Seeing the Holy Spirit dwell in thee.
Therefore, O Mother of God without
stain or blemish, glorified in heaven
and on earth, save our kind."
Sticharon at Vespers for The Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple

"An Archangel was sent from heaven,
to greet the Mother of God.
And seeing Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form,
he was amazed and with his bodiless voice,
he stood crying these words:
Hail, O height, most difficult for human
thought to climb!
Hail, O depth, most difficult for eyes of
angels to plumb!
Hail, O sustenance of him, who sustains
the cosmos!
Hail, thou womb of the incarnation of God!
Hail, thou through whom creation
becomes new!
Hail, thou through whom the Creator
becomes a child!
Hail, thou unwedded Bride."
Hymn from the Synaxis of the Mother of God

Left: The Annunciation, Novgorod, 12th C. The Archangel and Mary, of equal size, are the only figures in the picture. Gabriel has already delivered the heavenly message, for we see the image of Jesus on her bosom. In contrast to the declamatory stance of the angel, Mary stands with bent head, bowed in reflection, thoughtfully taking in the words of Gabriel.

Right: The Annunciation, Russian, 17th C. The sudden and mysterious appearance of the angel in her chamber has startled Mary, so that at first she hides her face in her *maphorion.*[39] Only gradually does she turn her face toward him, as he speaks to her in his capacity of messenger of God and the ray of the Holy Spirit touches her. The drama of the Annunciation to Mary is expressed with particular beauty in this icon.

The oldest evidence for the feast day on March 25 celebrating the angel's announcement to Mary of the birth of the Savior dates back to the middle of the sixth century. It was already ranked so high liturgically in 696 that it was celebrated even during the fast of Great Lent, which generally did not allow the celebration of feast days. Pope Sergius I (d. 701), himself from the East, added this and other feasts of the Christian East to the Roman calendar. This celebration remains very popular to this day. In Russia people used to set birds free from cages on this day.

The central figures of this portrayal are the Mother of God and the Archangel Gabriel. The hymns for March 25 have reworked the text of Luke 1:26–38 in a variety of expressions and images, not infrequently providing motifs for icon painting. Thus a beautiful large thirteenth century icon from Novgorod shows the Annunciation of the Angel to Mary as well as Immanuel in her womb. Also shown in a celestial segment is the Ancient of Days, that symbolic figure closely associated with the incarnation of the Word of God. The scene is placed in a palatial setting, a subtle connection with the idea of Mary as a "spiritual palace."

39 A kind of scarf covering the head and shoulders.

"I behold a strange, most
glorious mystery!
Heaven—the cave!
The cherubic throne—the Virgin!
The manger—the place
where Christ lay,
The uncontainable God, whom
we magnify in song!"

The Ninth Ode of the Canon of the Nativity of Christ, the work of Cosmas of Maium

The Synaxis of the Mother of God is appointed for the second day of Christmas. It is designed in a special way for the glorification of the Mother of God. She sits on a throne, the divine child on her lap. The Wise Men ride from afar and the shepherds approach the mountain cave reverently to see Mary and the child. Only the doubting Joseph has no place on this icon! In the lower half of the picture, a church choir is singing the hymns of Cosmas of Maium. Symbolic female figures representing the earth and the desert present the cave and the manger. The scene of the Nativity of Christ takes on a broader meaning: Mary becomes the symbolic figure of the redemption of humankind and of the universe.

Left: The Synaxis of the Mother of God, Pskov School, fourteenth century.
Mary sits enthroned with the child Jesus on her knee in front of a large cave. Behind Jesus' head is an eight-pointed star, composed of a red rhombus and a concave green square, emphasizing his divinity. On the left, the Wise Men come riding up. The shepherds and the angels of the Christmas tidings are depicted above. At the foot of the throne on the left we see the symbolic figure of the earth, pointing to the cave, and on the right, the symbolic figure of the desert with the manger above it. Underneath the throne, deacons sing hymns in honor of the Mother of God, while down on the right a figure representing paganism is mocking her. With his back turned to her, he has just pronounced an old Russian curse by spitting on the ground and raising a threatening fist at her.

Right: The Synaxis of the Mother of God, Novgorod School, beginning of the sixteenth century.
Mary sits in the center of the picture, enthroned in a double aureole with the Child Jesus on her lap. At the left, the three Wise Men approach; opposite them on the right are three shepherds. Underneath the throne there is a choir of singers, with a poet, a writer of hymns, on the right. At the left of the singers is the Patriarch Germanus, who points to the Mother of God. At the lower right edge, we see the symbolic figure of the earth pointing to the cave of the Nativity; at the left sits the symbolic figure of the desert with the manger. In a large arch above the scene, angels surround the beams of the Holy Spirit.

Below: The Dormition of the Mother of God, northern Russian, eighteenth century.
Following the Byzantine tradition, all twelve apostles stand grieving to the right and left of Mary's deathbed. Unseen by them, Christ holds the soul of his mother as an infant on his arm, to carry her to heaven with the accompanying angels. Above his head hovers a seraph in an aureole. In front of an architectural backdrop stand three bishops: Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, Hierotheus, and Timothy, presumably disciples of Paul, who are supposed to have been the first to make her Assumption into heaven known. In the foreground at the edge of the picture is the depiction of the legend of the Hebrew Jechoniah trying to overturn Mary's catafalque.

Page 153: The Dormition of the Mother of God, soapstone plate, Constantinople, tenth century.
This 13.1cm x 11.3cm soapstone relief shows all twelve apostles weeping and grieving as they approach Mary's deathbed. Invisible in their midst, Christ stands with the soul of his mother in his hands, making ready to carry it up to heaven in the company of an angel. The scene takes place under a richly ornamented arcade supported by delicate columns. This pictorial type is associated with sermons and legends from the Patristic era about the passing away[42] of Mary, and especially with the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God,[43] the origins of which reach back to the sixth century.

The Marian feast day, the fifteenth of August, demonstrates how erroneous it is to assume that the early Christian feasts were established in an idyllic religious atmosphere. The cult of the ancient Eastern mother-goddess Ishtar-Astarte, personified as the star known as *virgo spica*,[40] celebrated its sinking beneath the horizon on the tenth of August and its rising again on the eighth of September. Christians countered this cult of the Virgin star with their Marian feasts on the fifteenth of August and the eighth of September. Time and again the Mother of God is praised in the hymnody of the Eastern Church as "Star that has taken its course to God" or similar formulations. In like manner, the star emblem on her maphorion (the scarf covering her head and shoulders) has its origin here.

The fifteenth of August was incorporated into the Byzantine calendar around the year 600 as the definitive date for the feast. The beginnings of the portrayal, which eventually made its way into icon painting, go back to the sixth century. In contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church never declared the Assumption of Mary to be dogma. In icon painting, however, there are two established types of image that clearly reflect this dogma: One type shows Christ carrying in his hands the "little soul"[41] of the Mother of God, clothed in white, to heaven; the other type shows a clothed figure as well. Christ always stands behind the bier; sometimes an angel is in the foreground cutting off the hand of a mocking Jew. The apostles, with Peter and Paul easily recognizable by their facial characteristics, are also gathered around the bier. Quite frequently the apostles are depicted being transported to the scene by angels on clouds. In addition, there are usually two or three bishops who played an essential part in the development of Marian doctrine and hymnody, such as Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite (sixth century), John of Damascus (died c. 750), and Andrew of Crete (d. 740). Choirs of angels greet Christ and his mother.

A hymn for the fifteenth of August quite clearly illustrates again to what extent icon painting was guided by such texts: "By the royal command of God, the divinely inspired apostles were caught up from all over the world into the clouds on high. Reaching thine immaculate body, the source of Life, they kissed it with mighty devotion. The highest powers of heaven stood by with their own Master. Seized with dread, they accompanied thine inviolate body that had held God, and they went on high before thee, crying, unseen to the hierarchies above: 'Lo, the Queen of all, the Maid of God, is nigh.' Open wide the gates and receive above the world the Mother of the everlasting Light. For through her the salvation of all mankind has come. We have not the strength to look upon her, and are unworthy to render honors worthy of her, for her excellence is past all understanding. Therefore, O most pure Theotokos, who livest forever with thy Son, the King who brings life, pray without ceasing that thy newborn people be guarded on every side and saved from every assault of the enemy."

As so often with other themes, Jacob de Voragine (d. 1298) collected the pieces of narrative and wove them into a text in his *Legenda Aurea*, which was widely read in both East and West. One day, "as Mary's heart was aflame with yearning for her son, her spirit was moved and her tears flowed freely." An angel brings her a palm branch from paradise and promises her "in three days you will be taken from your body and received with great honor by your son." Mary's desire that "her dear sons and brothers, the apostles" might be present at her departure is fulfilled as her hour approaches. Of the scenes that then unfold we mention just these, how the angels "...saw that their King was carrying the soul of a woman in his arms and they were amazed and began to cry: 'Who is she who now ascends from the desert, overflowing with rapture, supported by her Loved One?'" But countering this gentle criticism of the angels it is emphasized "that the holy Virgin was led into heaven and exalted, unblemished, filled with joy, with full honors and special glory. The Church believes this because many saints recorded it and also proved it with many arguments." The account of the *Legenda aurea* addressed the faith of the simple people of the Church in a much more intimate way than theological tracts did.

40 Latin for "Virgin with an ear of corn."
41 In Russian, *dushenka.*
42 In Latin, *transitus.*
43 In Greek, *koimesis*; in Latin, *dormitio*; and in Russian, *uspenie.*

THE UNACCOMPANIED IMAGE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Russian Orthodox Church calendar alone lists approximately 250 miraculous Mother of God icons. There is no city (or often even street), house, geographic area, lake, river, village, or professional group within the realm of the vast Eastern Church that has not made the Mother of God its Patroness. Other Marian icons have appeared during critical historical periods of the people, whether these periods ended happily or unhappily. This trend continues today. The Russian city of Port Arturskaya was created after an unsuccessful battle against the Japanese at Port Arthur on January 2, 1905. The city's icon shows the Mother of God holding a cloth of the Savior Not Made by Hands (mandylion) in front of an expansive bay. Above her we see God the Father between two archangels, Michael on the right with sword and standard, and Gabriel on the left with a lily. Two cherubs hold a crown over Mary's head. This icon has incorporated more than a few western prototypes, but it also illustrates the plethora of patronages bestowed upon the Mother of God in recent times. This corresponds to a wealth of Marian icons that, comparatively speaking, considerably outnumber the icons of Christ.

The primary reason for this veneration of the Mother of God lies in the fact that both Roman Catholics and Orthodox see the Mother of the Son of Man as the mediatrix of his message of salvation to humanity; for that reason she is the primordial image of the Church. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches share the common teaching that Mary, as Mother of the eternal Word of God, is also venerated as the Mother of the Church, through whom the message of her Son was made possible.

In view of the plethora of Mother of God icons, comparable to the wealth of Marian images in Latin America, we must first attempt to classify the icons into groups with similar characteristics. We will attempt to do this in the following and, we hope, helpful overview of the most important types of Marian icons. A final note: Despite their variety, all of the Mother of God icons portray the same head covering, usually a blue scarf over which a cherry-colored shoulder shawl, the maphorion, is laid; at her forehead and on her left and right shoulders we see three stars, which symbolize her virginity before, during, and after the birth of her Son, as the early Church taught.

The Unaccompanied Mother of God
- Orans
- Paraclesis

The Mother of God with the Immanuel
- Platytera
- Blacherniotissa
- Great Panhagia

The Hodegetria Group
- Hodegetria
- Psychosostria or Iverskaya
- Smolenskaya
- Czestokowa
- Tricheirusa (The Mother of God of the Three Hands)

The Eleusa Umilenie Group
- Vladimirskaya
- Donskaya
- Podkubenskaya
- Pelagonitissa
- Glykophilusa

The Group of Variations
- Peribleptos
- Ierusalimskaya - Our Lady of Jerusalem
- Grusinskaya - Our Lady of Georgia
- Pimenovskaya/Petrovskaya
- Kykkotissa
- Galaktotrophusa

The Symbolic or Allegorical Group
- The Life-giving Spring
- The Burning Bush
- The Joy of All Who Sorrow
- The Protecting Veil (Pokrov)

Although these are the usual classifications used by art historians, they do not always correspond to the designations on the icons themselves, and traditions surrounding various types of icons and their titles are frequently obscure and contradictory. On the other hand, this very fact is witness to the ebullience of Orthodox Marian devotion.

Page 154: The Mother of God Hodegetria, Constantinople, second half of the fourteenth century.
This icon (also called Pimenovskaya after Metropolitan Pimen), which shows Mary upright with the boy Jesus on her left arm, belongs to the Hodegetria Group, in which the Mother of God presents to the prayerful beholder her Son as Word of God made flesh. Jesus is characterized by the wise eyes and high forehead of Immanuel. The scroll in his hand alludes to his later role as proclaimer of the Gospel truth. Mary, on the other hand, whose slender form is completely covered by the maphorion with only her sorrowful face visible slightly bowed to the left, is the mysterious bearer of the Son of God and keeps herself in the background.

Above: Mother of God, Intercessor, Russian, second half of the fourteenth century.
On this icon, the Mother of God appears involved in dialogue with the boy Jesus entreating his mercy on sinful humankind and Jesus looks up at her trustingly. The tender mother-child relationship is conveyed by the intimate way in which the heads are bowed toward each other and the loving way in which they hold hands.

"To thee who hast saved us from grave dangers, from diverse temptations and misfortunes through Thy motherly intercession we sing our hymn of victory with voices of heartfelt thanks."

From the Hymns to the Mother of God of Theophanes Graptus (d. 849)

Left: The Mother of God Orans, Byzantine, 12th C.
The first icon showing Mary in the orans position without Jesus came from Jerusalem and was transported to Constantinople. The original image, no longer extant, is preserved in many replicas, and there are many designations for it. It is called Mother of God Diakonissa (the Handmaiden), because Mary had been brought by her parents to serve in the temple. Another designation, the Unshakable Wall, commemorates the siege of Constantinople by Kievan Rus. The siege ended on June 18, 860 after the Patriarch Photius had publicly placed the city under the invincible protection of the Virgin. In a procession, he brought a holy relic, a piece of her clothing, to the shore and immersed it in the sea to ward off the armada of the enemy. Thus the icon received its third name, the Mother of God of the Thousand Ships.

Right: The Mother of God Orans, Apse Mosaic, Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, Kiev, 11th C.
This colossal figure (5.5m high) dominates the central space of the apse in this Church consecrated in 1039. The semicircle of the apse bears the inscription, "God is in her. She cannot falter. God is her help from day to day." Mary is shown as a full-length figure in the orans posture. The three stars on her blue and gold garments signify her virginity.

In the art of the ancient Church, the orans gesture (with raised arms) is the posture of prayer. The Mother of God began to be portrayed with this gesture of prayer especially as the doctrine concerning her divine motherhood began to develop. In her role as a symbol of Mother Church, she was often depicted in wall paintings in an attitude of prayer. In icon painting, however, we seldom find an image of Mary by herself in orans posture; she is more often portrayed in various combinations with the Immanuel.

"O Thou who lovest mankind,
In Thy mercy Thou hast given
Thy Mother
To Thy servants as a helper.
Through her Thou hast completed
Thine ineffable and awesome work
of salvation
And hast restored in us

The image of Thy divine dignity.
Thus we honor her all-venerable Feast
And sing hymns of Thy power,
O Jesus, Thou who rulest over all."

Hymn on the Feast Day of the Deposition of the Robe of the Mother of God, July 2

The Paraclesis[44] icons usually show Mary in half-figure and semi-profile, both hands raised in front of her bosom in prayer or intercession, holding the hand in back slightly higher than the hand in front. Though this icon is very probably a portrayal stemming from the deësis image that has come to be venerated as an independent unit, the legends surrounding it lead us further afield. It is said, for instance, that this miraculous icon was kept in the Chalkoprateia Church[45] in Constantinople, where the *soros* or coffin of the Mother of God was venerated; for this reason this icon is also known as the Hagiosoritissa. The coffin of Mary, along with her maphorion, was also venerated in the Blachernae Church; so the question of which church originally housed the image of the Hagiosoritissa is still unresolved. Ochrid was the place of origin for the veneration of the Paraclesis, which spread throughout the Balkans.

44 Greek for "invocation" or "consolation."

45 Named for the Chalke neighborhood in the city.

Left: The Mother of God Paraclesis, Greek artist working in Ochrid, twelfth or thirteenth century.
This icon is the left panel of a diptych in the Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom in Kiev.

Right: The Mother of God Chalkoprateia, Serbian (?), fourteenth century.
Conforming to the pictorial type of the Mother of God Paraclesis, the head of Mary is slightly bowed to one side. Her hands are raised to shoulder height. Her deep brown face, faintly brightened by gold embellishment, is raised mysteriously above the golden background behind a large dark halo.

"Queen of the Heavenly Host,
Defender of our Souls,
We thy servants offer to thee
Songs of victory and thanksgiving,
For thou, O Mother of God,
Hast delivered us from danger.
But, as thou hast invincible power,
Free us from conflicts of any kind
That we may cry to thee:
Hail, thou unwedded Bride!"
Opening Kontakion of the Akathist Hymn

Left: The Mother of God of the Sign, Novgorod, thirteenth century.
The portrayal of the Mother of God in half-figure and in the orans posture with Jesus Immanuel on a medallion on her breast stems from an icon in Constantinople, the Blacherniotissa (named for the Blachernae Church), which itself stems from a no longer extant fourth-century icon from Jerusalem. This pictorial theme was a particular favorite in Russia, where it was called the Mother of God of the Sign.[46]

Right: The Mother of God Platytera, marble relief, Venice, eleventh century.
This 136cm x 76cm marble icon, in the Church of Santa Maria Mater Domini, depicts the Mother of God in the orans posture standing under an arch, with the Immanuel.

46 In Russian, *znamenie.*

PLATYTERA

The key to understanding this group may be found in the portrayal of the Mother of God with the Immanuel at her bosom, as depicted in the Novgorod icon. The central figure in this group of icons is not merely the incarnation of the eternal Word of God in the form of a child, but rather the preexistent Word in the symbolic figure of the Immanuel. The key to the Immanuel symbolism may also be found in hymnody, in a Marian hymn of the Byzantine Liturgy of Saint Basil: "All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, the assembly of angels and the race of men. O sanctified paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a child—our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens." "More spacious than" is *platytera* in Greek, and this group was thus named Platytera. The main characteristic is the Immanuel on a *clipeus* on the bosom of the Mother of God, or sometimes hovering in front of her without the clipeus.

BLACHERNIOTISSA

The name of this group of icons comes from the Blachernae neighborhood in Constantinople, situated on the Golden Horn at the north end of the city—an area crucial to the defense of the city. At this site, a Church in honor of the Mother of God at the Blachernae was built in the middle of the fifth century. The icon kept there was accordingly titled the Blacherniotissa. The tunic of

Left: The Great Panhagia, Yaroslavl, twelfth century.
Standing Mother of God in the orans posture with Jesus Immanuel on a clipeus on her breast. Like Mary, Jesus has his arms extended. To the left and right of Mary's face, we see medallions picturing an angel with an orb. Mary's eyes in her narrow face appear serious and sad, as if she foresees the passion of Christ.

Above: The Mother of God of the Sign, Russian, seventeenth century.
Half-figure portrait of the Mother of God with arms raised in prayer and hands open. The child Jesus on the clipeus at her breast is depicted as the Immanuel, with a scroll in his hand. Mary's face and shoulders are wrapped tightly in the dark maphorion.

the Mother of God, another imperial treasure, was kept in this church along with this icon.

As an iconographic type, the Blacherniotissa portrays the Mother of God holding the Immanuel on a clipeus on her breast. In Russia, this type was designated the Mother of God of the Sign in accordance with Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel." Similar to the Blacherniotissa in Constantinople, the Mother of God of the Sign was also a palladium, a protectress of old Russia.

THE GREAT PANHAGIA

This large icon of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, painted in central Russia, belongs to the Blacherniotissa type in both form and content. The large figure holds the Immanuel on a clipeus in front of her maphorion. The Immanuel holds his hands outstretched in benediction like the outstretched hands of the Mother of God Orans. In the upper corners, there are usually seraphim or archangels holding orbs, majestic Marian regalia. Like its prototype from Constantinople, this icon was revered as the patroness of city walls.

Left: The Mother of God Hodegetria, Suzdal, second half of the fourteenth century.
The three stars on the dark, gold-edged maphorion trimmed with tassels symbolize the virginity of the Mother of God. Although the child Jesus in his red outer garment is depicted as quite childlike, he raises his hand in blessing, partially toward his Mother and partially toward the beholder.

THE HODEGETRIA, THE ONE WHO SHOWS THE WAY

The prototype of this iconographic image was originally in a monastery in Constantinople, endowed by a Byzantine emperor around the middle of the ninth century. Its monks ministered primarily to the blind (for that reason it was called Monastery of the Hodegon—"the one who shows the way"). After the victory of the iconophiles in 843, the Hodegetria was widespread in wall painting and icon painting throughout the whole Byzantine cultural domain.

Innumerable copies of this primordial image were painted in Constantinople. In terms of form, the frontal stance of mother and child is emphasized, imparting a respectful distance from the praying beholder and an eloquent expression of the protective power of the two figures over humankind. In terms of content, Christ sits on the left arm of his Mother, holding a scroll in his left hand and his right hand raised in benediction. Her right hand is raised to the child, a gesture that also commands adoration from the beholder. Its clear meaning and expressiveness make this icon one of the most beloved images of the Mother of God. Many monasteries, cities, and whole dynasties have declared this miraculous Marian icon to be their patroness. Numerous legends have unfolded around this icon, relating how it overcame mountain ranges and rivers to find its self-determined

Right: The Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow, post-Byzantine, second half of the sixteenth century.
Here the child Jesus sits on his mother's right arm and looks past the frame of the image to the right. Mary's head is also bowed slightly to the right, although she looks to the left, lending this image a sense of movement. Jesus' garment and Mary's maphorion are both embellished with patterns, suggesting that this icon is from the middle of the sixteenth century.

Left: The Mother of God of Czestochowa, Andrea Vanni (?), second half of the fourteenth century.
It is reported that this icon, a variation of the Byzantine Hodegetria, was miraculously transported to the Paulist Monastery of Jasna Gora at Czestochowa. It was believed that the Black Madonna was responsible for the monastery's liberation from two sieges. This is the national religious shrine of Poland and the goal of many pilgrimages. The beautiful coral covering is changed according to the time of year and the liturgical calendar.

Right: The Mother of God Psychosostria, Nicholas of Ochrid, middle of the fourteenth century.
The first Psychosostria (Savior of Souls) was probably commissioned in Constantinople by Archbishop Gregory of Ochrid. Stylistically, it is a mixture of the Hodegetria-type and the Eleusa-type, because Mary points to the Son of God, but he gazes up to his Mother, rather than at the beholder.

"As Advocate and Intercessor
lead thou Him to me for my salvation,
whom Thou hast borne,
for me, so full of sin.
Be Thou, O Virgin,
my protection and the renewal of my life.
Lead thou me by the hand
on the paths of the knowledge of God."

From the Hymns to the Mother of God,
John of Damascus (d. c. 750)

way to the place of its veneration. The Mother of God as the One Who Shows the Way not only refers to patronage of the blind, but also serves as a stimulus for choosing the Mother of God as a personal guide for life.

THE MOTHER OF GOD OF CZESTOCHOWA

The so-called Black Madonna of Czestochowa is one of the most famous miraculous images found on the border between the Orthodox East and the Roman Catholic West. Her popular name comes from the blackening caused by candle smoke. According to legend, she belongs to that group of Marian images painted by the Evangelist Luke. The Mother of God holds her child on her left arm. The child, slightly facing left, gazes at the beholder. The expression on the face of the Mother of God reflects grief and sadness. In its present form, this miraculous icon was probably a gift from the House of Anjou to the fourteenth-century Polish King Vladislav, and was later bequeathed to the Paulist Monastery of Jasna Gora[47] in 1382. The dark streaks on the cheek of the Mother of God were caused either by willful sacrilege or lightning. This icon has been Poland's protective icon since the seventeenth century.

THE PSYCHOSOSTRIA OR IVERSKAYA

The Mother of God Psychosostria or Psychosoteria[48] holds the Christ Child on her left arm, as she points to him with her right hand and invites the beholder to adore him. The child holds a scroll in his left hand, and his right hand is raised in blessing. Mary

47 In Latin, *mons clarus.*

48 Both these epithets mean "Savior of Souls" in Greek.

Left: The Mother of God Hodegetria of Smolensk, Vologda School, fourteenth century.
The beautiful face of Mary is surrounded by a softly flowing maphorion. Her delicate hand gestures toward the child Jesus on her arm, sitting in the Pantocrator posture, in clothes as elegant as those of his Mother. The cross in the halo symbolizes the Passion of the Son of God.

Right: Mother of God Tricheirusa, Russian wood icon, around 1750.
The prototype of the Tricheirusa originated in Syria, where the Caliph had the hand of John of Damascus cut off. As the dismembered saint was praying in front of the image of Mary, she reached her hand out of the icon and miraculously rejoined his hand back with his arm. Out of thankfulness John added a silver hand to the icon.

"My Queen, most kind, my hope, O God-Bearer,
refuge of orphans and sure defense of travelers,
joy of the sorrowful and suffering,
Protectress, Thou seest my need,
Thou seest my misery.
Help me, weak as I am, lead me, a traveler.
Thou knowest my pain, free me from it,
if Thou willst.
For I have no other helper but Thee,
no other Protectress, no other kind comforter,
only Thee alone, O God-Bearer,
to preserve and protect me world without end. Amen."
From the Hymns for the Feast Day of the Smolenskaya Icon, July 28

bows her head slightly toward the child. Frequently, the heads of two angels are in the upper corners. Sometimes the relationship between mother and child is vividly portrayed, with the child holding his head a bit back in order to look up into his mother's eyes, his hand held in benediction on his chest. This depiction shows a distinct tendency of the painter to soften the stern frontal view of the classic Hodegetria in favor of a more intimate mother-child relationship. In Russia, this icon is called Iverskaya, the Iberian Mother of God.

THE SMOLENSKAYA
This icon is of the strict Hodegetria type: The Christ Child on his Mother's left arm,

Left: The Mother of God Tricheirusa of Hilandar, Serbian, nineteenth century.
The expansive figure of the three-handed Mary takes up the top two-thirds of the picture. In the lower third, the former Serbian Prince, Stephen Nemanja, and his son, Sava, hold a model of a Church in their hands. Through Archbishop Sava, the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos became the center of Serbian monasticism. The Tricheirusa is thought to have come to Hilandar miraculously, taking its place on the abbot's seat.

Above: The Mother of God Hodegetria, Pskov, end of the fourteenth century.
The boy Jesus, wearing a gold-hatched garment, sits on the left arm of his Mother and gazes directly at the beholder. A mysterious spiritual energy seems to emanate from his wise face beneath the high forehead.

with a scroll in his left hand and his right hand raised in the gesture of blessing, gazes directly at the praying beholder, as the Mother of God looks past him. Legends attest that since its beginnings in Kiev this miraculous icon has been intimately bound up with the history of Russia, the founding of the Principality of Moscow, and the founding of the Russian Empire.

THE TRICHEIRUSA (THE MOTHER OF GOD OF THE THREE HANDS)

This type of icon portrays the Mother of God with the child on her right arm, with another hand at the bottom of the image. The origin of this icon is closely connected with John of Damascus (d. c. 750), the great Doctor of the Church, icon theologian, and Marian hymnist. According to legend, the Caliph had John's left hand cut off for apparent treason and publicly displayed it. John somehow managed to retrieve his severed hand. In prayer before an icon of Mary, he held his severed hand to the stump of his arm. The Mother of God heard his prayer and the hand grew back into place. This was the basis of the legend, which was variously embellished, particularly in view of the significance of John as Marian poet and hymnist. As for the Mother of God of the Three Hands, it is evident from the name itself that in time the arm of John came to be seen as an arm of Mary.

Three of the most significant depictions of the Mother of God are the Blacherniotissa (Mary in orans position, with Jesus Immanuel on a clipeus at her breast), the Eleusa (Mary with the divine child displaying tender intimacy), and the Hodegetria (Mary pointing to the boy Jesus on her arm). The latter is by far the most widespread. According to legend, Saint Luke painted a portrait of mother and child on the top of a table in the holy family's home in Nazareth. In 453, this primordial icon was sent by Empress Eudocia from Jerusalem to her sister-in-law Pulcheria in Constantinople. A

1

2

3

church was built there (in the Hodegon Monastery) specifically for this icon. The Hodegetria reportedly protected the city from attack on a number of occasions, and was carried as a banner for protection on military campaigns. Later, it became customary to carry the Hodegetria to the imperial palace for a few days for veneration during Eastertide. An exception to this practice took place in 1453, when the icon was taken to the Chora Monastery instead to protect it from a siege by the Turks. It was destroyed when the city was taken. Fortunately, there are many replicas of this primordial icon, some of which are considered miraculous. The Hodegetria often appears on the iconostasis as the representative counterpart of Christ Pantocrator.

4

5

6

The eleven icons on these two pages can be immediately identified as portrayals of the Mother of God Hodegetria, although they are from different countries and painted at different times. With the exception of the full-length figure of the Mother of God with Child Enthroned, all the others show Mary in half-figure, pointing to the boy Jesus. Following the strict procedures of icon painting, all appear to be almost the same form; upon closer examination, though, it becomes clear that each has its own unique radiance, distinguishing it unmistakably from each of the others.

7

8

9

10

11

1 Macedonian, middle of the fifteenth century
2 Dionysius, 1502
3 The Mother of God of Smolensk, southern Russian, end of the eighteenth century
4 Novgorod, middle of the fourteenth century
5 Tver, first quarter of the fifteenth century
6 Moscow, late fourteenth century
7 Greek, early fifteenth century
8 Greek, seventeenth century
9 Byzantine, late fourteenth century
10 Hilandar Monastery, thirteenth century
11 The Mother of God of Tikhvin, Russian, sixteenth century

"Today the renowned city of Moscow
is decked in festive colors,
for she hath received,
like the morning's first rays,
O Lady, Thy miraculous image,
to which we hasten and cry unto
Thee: O Thou miraculous Lady,
Pray to Christ, our God,
whose flesh cometh from Thee,
that he might preserve this city
and all Christian cities and lands,
holding them unharmed by the
assault of enemies and that He,
the Merciful One, may save
our souls."

From a Hymn for the Feast of the
Vladimirskaya Icon, May 21

Left: The Mother of God Vladimirskaya, Moscow School, around 1650.
Commissioned by Prince Isyslav of Kiev, this icon was painted in Constantinople, showing the Jesus child caressing his mother's cheek. It reached Kiev in 1132. From there it was taken by the prince's son, Andrei Bogolyubsky, to his residence in Vladimir, where it got the name Vladimirskaya. In 1315, this Eleusa icon reached Moscow, where, in 1395, it allegedly brought about liberation from the Mongolian tyrant Tamerlane. It also helped win later wars, and thus came to be called the Mother of the Russian World.

Right: The Mother of God of Tenderness, Novgorod, twelfth century.
Mary bows her head lovingly toward the child Jesus, who snuggles up to her cheek. Her face, however, does not reflect happiness, but rather melancholy in premonition of the Passion of her Son.

The main characteristic of this group is the change from a frontal orientation, facing those who pray in its presence, to an emphasis on a tender and trusting spiritual relationship between the Mother of God, the Christ Child, and the beholder. This deeply expressive interplay of relationships has proven itself quite valuable, especially from an artistic standpoint. The Greek word *eleusa* means "compassionate one," while the Russian *umilenie* encompasses a number of meanings, including "gentleness," "tenderness," "compassion," "intimacy," and "grace"—all expressed in this multifaceted category of icons.

THE VLADIMIRSKAYA

The Mother of God of Vladimir gazes at the beholder and bows her head to the child, who tenderly caresses his mother's cheek with his own, looking up at her with trepidation. The expression on Mary's face is one of deep sorrow. Gazing from the beholder to the child, she directs attention to the drama of the redemption to come—an artistically imaginative and well-planned psychological effect. This icon reached Kiev at the beginning of the twelfth century. It was probably a gift of the Byzantine imperial court; later it was "kidnapped" in 1155 by Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky and taken to Vladimir on the Klyasma, finally landing in Moscow, where it was considered the Protectress of the Russian Empire.

THE PODKUBENSKAYA

Lake Kubena is situated in northern Russia between the Vologda and the old Kirillov

"Beholding Thy crucifixion,
Our most holy Lady cries out:
O Son, what a strange sight I see,
Thou, who hast healed the sufferings
of the sick, Thou who must now
endure a suffering never yet suffered,
How have Thine enemies rewarded
Thee for the beneficence Thou hast
bestowed, Thou who art the
Benefactor of all."

From the Stavrotheotokion for Wednesday Matins

Monastery. There has been a church on an island in this lake since the fourteenth century. This Mother of God is one of its icons, and has earned its reputation as one of the masterpieces of northern Russian icon painting. The Mother of God bows her head over her child, who looks up to her more in trust than in fear. The expansive motherly face gazes with large, almond-shaped eyes past the child and the beholder into the right corner (from the point of view of the beholder). The child has placed his hands around his mother's neck, as almost always in the Eleusa Umilenie group. We can well imagine that the people who lived in the severe climatic conditions of that area prayed to her with the same trust we see in the child's eyes as he gazes at his Mother.

PELAGONITISSA

The content of this portrayal is the same mother-child relationship as the others, but the bodily postures of the two have reached their anatomical limits in this depiction. The child sits with his legs around his mother's right arm. With his back turned toward the praying beholder, he turns his head around as far as possible and gazes fearfully at the Mother of God, who looks far off into the distance, as if she could see the events of Golgotha. The child's right arm is bent down backwards, and his left hand caresses his mother's right cheek. The left hand of the Mother of God gestures toward the child, directing the adoration of the beholder. The frequently encountered designation of this Marian-type icon, often found in the Balkans as *mère de tendresse*

Left: The Mother of God of Beloozero, Russian, thirteenth century.
The red halo behind Mary's head also encircles the head of the child Jesus, who stretches to cuddle up to his mother's cheek. His garment has ridden up, exposing one of his little legs. With her left hand the Mother of God gestures toward her divine Son. In the upper corners of the picture there are two angels in medallions, similar to the embellishments in the frame.

Right: The Mother of God Pelagonitissa, Makarije Zographos, 1422.
Makarije, who belonged to the artistic circle of his brother, wall-painter Bishop Jovan, shows the child Jesus turned toward the beholder in a childlike display of affection for his Mother. In typical Byzantine style, Mary's face is gravely somber.

"Through Thee we were saved
from danger,
Through Thee we have received great joy.
We praise Thee as our benevolent provider
And speak thy fame as our help
in time of need.
We are rich in Thy holy intercession
Because Thou hast freed us from folly and
danger, Thou, the Mother of Christ our
God. We sing Thy praises as the source
of all goodness,
Raising our voices in faithful hymns
of thanksgiving."

From the Marian hymns of Theophanes Graptos (d. 845)

Left: The Mother of God Donskaya, Feofan Grek (?), end of the fourteenth century.
Mary bows her head to the Jesus child; he sits with knees drawn together on her right hand, placing his naked legs on the left hand of his Mother, who gathers his garment in folds. The Jesus child cuddles cheek to cheek with his Mother and, without taking his eyes off her, raises his right hand in benediction.

Right: The Mother of God Glykophilusa, Greek, end of the sixteenth century.
Mary holds her little Son tenderly, as he sits on her right hand stroking her cheek and looking up at her affectionately.

(Mother of Tenderness), should not be seen as sentimental; in fact, it expresses deeply sorrowful tenderness, as seen on the face and in the expression of the Mother of God. To make this poetically lucid, a whole group of Marian hymns (comparable to the Latin hymn *Stabat Mater*) developed in the Eastern Church. They are called the Stavrotheotokia, hymns of the Mother of God under the Cross.

THE DONSKAYA

The Mother of God bows her head over the child lower than in the Vladimirskaya, as both figures look deeply into each other's eyes. The beholder is not drawn into this intimate mother-child relationship, but rather is moved to devoted contemplation. This icon was painted at the end of the fourteenth century by the renowned artist Theophanes the Greek (Feofan Grek), who was himself, according to ancient references, deeply influenced by hesychastic experiences of prayer. Bold curvatures are characteristic of his artistic brilliance. According to legend, this miraculous icon was transported to the Cossacks of the Don at the battle against the Mongols in 1380 on the Field of Snipes, and it assisted the victory of Prince Dmitri. Later it was placed in one of the cathedrals of the Kremlin.

Left: The Mother of God Glykophilusa, fresco icon, Byzantine, before 1335.
On a wall of the Chora Church (Kariye Djami) in Constantinople, we see a full-length figure of the Mother of God, raising the child Jesus in both her hands as he cuddles closely to her. Her head bows down toward him. With outstretched arms the child holds on to Mary's maphorion, which drapes in copious folds.

Above: The Mother of God Eleusa, Russian, end of the fourteenth century.
Resting in the hands of his Mother, the Jesus child tenderly touches her chin, holding a scroll in his left hand toward the praying beholder. The child's outer garment is secured with a strap under which we see a floral-print undergarment, fashionable at the end of the fourteenth century.

THE GLYKOPHILUSA

This type of icon, sometimes called Our Tender Loving Lady, shows the Mother of God holding the child with both hands, while the child looks up at her, placing both arms around her neck. Sometimes the Mother of God kisses the child's right hand, a motif that came about through Western influence. The Russian designation, Vzygrannaya (Mother of God Playing with Her Child), describes the actual content of the image even more precisely. From a literary point of view, the image stems from extrabiblical (apocryphal) sources. It may be that the Marian artists of the Eastern Church wanted to paint a pictorial theme that could in some way "relieve" the praying beholder from the dogmatic stringency that characterizes most of the Mother of God icons. On the other hand, the serious expression on the face of the Mother of God indicates clearly that she, unlike the child, knows full well what his fate will be. It would not be appropriate to speak of an idyllic mother-child scene here. What this image ultimately conveys is part of the reality of the Incarnation of the Word of God: the Mother of God played with him during his childhood, just as she must have wrapped him in diapers in the manger.

Like the original Hodegetria, the legend of the original Eleusa claims it was painted by Saint Luke in Nazareth as a portrait of Mary with the boy Jesus. It is more probable, however, that the first portrayal of Mary in tender, loving familiarity with her small Son originated between the fifth and sixth centuries in a Coptic venue. The oldest extant Eleusa depiction is a ninth century Syrian ivory figure; it shows the enthroned Mother

1

2

5

of God being caressed by her child. Beginning in the tenth century, a whole series of Eleusa icons were created in Russia, where simple people of faith were particularly attracted to the expression of tenderness between mother and child. This touching, quite natural relationship was repeated again and again in newer variations. Painting guidelines for the depiction of the Eleusa were not established until the late thirteenth century; icon painters were given considerable freedom, as long as the religious dignity of this pictorial theme was kept intact and did not degenerate into mere sentimentality.

6

3

4

When comparing the eight icons on these two pages, which stem from different periods and different geographical areas, we see the same intensity of feeling in the mother-child relationship quite clearly expressed in all of them. The mother bows her head toward the child, who cuddles her cheek to cheek. The position of the child, whether on the left or the right arm, on one or both of his mother's hands, is no more important than whether he is sitting or stretched out. In spite of the caresses of her little Son, the Mother of God always appears to be expressing feelings ranging from earnest melancholy to deepest bereavement,

7

8

stemming from her premonition of the suffering in store for her Son.

1 The Mother of God Eleusa, post-Byzantine, sixteenth century.
2 The Mother of God of Korsun, Bulgarian, early eighteenth century.
3 The Mother of God Glykophilusa, Italo-Byzantine, eighteenth century.
4 The Mother of God Petrovskaya, Russian, sixteenth century.
5 The Mother of God Umilenie, Novgorod, beginning of the fifteenth century.
6 The Mother of God of Vladimir, beginning of the fifteenth century.
7 The Mother of God of Yaroslavl, Russian, middle of the fifteenth century.
8 The Mother of God Eleusa, Greek, beginning of the seventeenth century.

Above: The Mother of God Ierusalimskaya, Novgorod, fifteenth or sixteenth century.
The original icon, supposed to have been painted by the Evangelist Luke, reached Constantinople from Jerusalem in 455 and reached Kiev in 988. Prince Vladimir presented it to the Novgorodians when they became Christians. In 1571, Ivan the Terrible took this image of the Mother of God as loot to Moscow after he had conquered Novgorod. In all of the replicas, the child Jesus sits on Mary's right arm, with his right leg crossed over his left leg; Mary's maphorion falls in jagged folds under her neck. Her left hand gestures toward the Son of God, who already appears as the Christ with a cross-halo.

Above: The Mother of God Kykkotissa, Simon Ushakov, 1668.
Although this icon is also said to have been painted by Saint Luke, it was probably not painted until the beginning of the eleventh century. The Emperor Alexius I Comnenus donated it in 1082 to the Kykkos Monastery in Cyprus. The child Jesus sits with dangling legs on the right arm of his Mother. Her left hand holds the left arm of her Son, who holds an open scroll in his hand. Mary and Jesus both have bowed their heads to the right (from the beholder's vantage point).

In line with the serious, even strict character of the Eastern Church's Mariology, only very narrow variations of aesthetic expression were allowed. These were then taken advantage of fully. The Hodegetria variations all have to do with the way the Mother of God holds her head and on which arm she holds the child: Peribleptos, Grusinskaya, and Pimenovskaya (Petrovskaya) on the left arm, Ierusalimskaya on the right arm. Most of the icons of this group show Mary with her head bowed slightly over the child. Usually, the child gazes at the Mother of God, who herself gazes at the beholder. In all of them, the strictly frontal pose of the Hodegetria-type icon has been carefully and subtly but clearly shifted. We have chosen two from a rich variety of examples: the Kykkotissa and the Galaktotrophusa.

The prototype of Kykkotissa (Russian: Kikkskaya) is an icon of the Kykkos Monastery on Cyprus, founded in 1082 by a Byzantine emperor. Legend has it that it was painted by the Evangelist Luke for immigrants from Egypt. It was then brought to Constantinople after the Moslem conquest, and later to Cyprus. In its monastery, it has been venerated by Christians as well as by Moslems. Our icon is as complicated as it is impressive: The Mother of God holds the Christ Child in her right arm in such a way that she is able to hold his left arm above the wrist with her left hand, while he holds a corner of her maphorion in his right hand. The Mother of God and child bow their

Left: The Mother of God Galaktotrophusa, Greek Islands, seventeenth century.
The motif of the nursing goddess was prevalent in ancient Egypt and Greece. The earliest Christian portrayal is on a third-century fresco in the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome. The Mother of God Nursing appeared soon thereafter on Coptic icons. In contrast to the West where the nursing child was painted as a quite natural occurrence, the icon painters of the East were hesitant to portray this theme. On the illustration shown here, for example, the breast of the Mother of God is far too small and positioned unnaturally high.

heads slightly to the right, cheek to cheek, and both gaze beyond the beholder. The child, with obvious characteristics of the Immanuel, holds an unrolled scroll inscribed with Greek letters in his left hand. His garment does not cover his calves or feet.

The theme of the Mother of God Nursing,[49] or Galaktotrophusa, was at first geographically limited in ancient Christian art to Egypt, where the Christians used it as a "weapon" against the heathen worship of images of Isis with her child, Horus. In this context passages from the New Testament, such as Luke 11:27, were used effectively, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" But even apart from this context in the history of religions, the nursing mother was a favorite motif in artistic endeavors during the Hellenistic period. After the victory of the iconophiles in 843, the Church gradually developed reservations about this pictorial motif, and icons of this type became rare. They show the Mother of God with head bowed slightly towards the child in her arms, to whom she gives her right breast.

49 The Latin is *Maria lactans.*

Above: The Mother of God Grusinskaya, Russian, first half of the eighteenth century.
The Grusinskaya is an almost perfect mirror image of the icon of the Mother of God Ierusalimskaya on the opposite page. A Byzantine replica probably made its way to Georgia, where it was called the Georgian Lady (Grusinskaya), or, sometimes, the Iberian Mother of God (Iverskaya). The oldest Grusinskaya originated in 1360 and was taken to Moscow soon thereafter, where replicas of it were as popular as in Georgia.

"Moses recognized in the burning bush
the great Mystery of thy giving birth.
In a lucid image the young men
have prefigured the mystery,
standing in the midst of the fire,
but not burning,
O spotless, holy Virgin."

From the Hymns to the Mother of God
composed by Joseph (d. 886)

Left: The Mother of God of the Burning Bush, Russian, eighteenth century.
The fire-red aureole with the image of the Mother of God is in the center of an octagon formed by two four-pointed stars with rose petals encircling it. In the light-colored points we see the Evangelists, and on the rose petals, archangels. In the four corners there are scenes with Moses, Isaiah, Jacob, and Ezekiel, referring to prophesies of the Virgin Mother of the Messiah.

Right: The Mother of God of the Burning Bush, Byzantine, end of the twelfth century.
The first pictorial presentation of this motif is found on an illumination of a Greek manuscript around 1100. On Byzantine icons, Moses, with loosened shoes, is always depicted looking up to the Mother of God in the burning bush.

This category of Marian icons includes all types of icons that relate the protective ministry of the Mother of God to the individual situation of a person seeking help, or where this protective aspect is related to a particular object. The distinction between the symbolic and the allegorical, however, is not always as clearly defined as theory would have it.

THE BURNING BUSH

Exodus 3:2 records that the angel of God appeared to Moses "in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed." The Fathers of the Church elaborated on this indelible image quite early in Christian history—just as the bush was in flames and yet not consumed, so the virginity of the Mother of God in the mystery of the conception of the Son of God also remained intact. From this way of thinking, two types of images emerged.

The *Byzantine* form is described in the *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos:* "Moses loosens his shoes. He is surrounded by sheep, and in front of him is a burning thornbush, with the Holy Virgin and her child. At her side, an angel gazes at Moses. On the other side of the bush is Moses again, standing with one hand outstretched, and a staff in the other."

The *Russian* form is more complicated: The Mother of God with the Child (generally represented as an Hodegetria icon) is in the middle of two four-pointed stars with elongated points. One is on top of the other diagonally, creating an eight-pointed star that symbolizes the number eight, which is a secret sign or cipher meaning perfection.

Below: The Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring, Greek, around 1700.
The Mother of God with the child Jesus, raising both hands in blessing and sitting on her right arm, hovers over the golden basin of a fountain. Angels hold a crown over Mary's head. The basin of the fountain is on a pillar in a raised pool; it is replenished with holy water from above, from which the sick and feeble hope to receive relief from their sufferings.

Left: The Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring of Balikli, Greek, nineteenth century.
Here we see a large, square fish pool with the Constantinople city wall behind it. People from all classes of society are crowded around the pool in the hope of receiving relief from their infirmities. This water enjoys the blessing of the Mother of God, whom we see with the image of the child Jesus on her breast in the upper section of the fountain, her hands raised in intercessory prayer for the sick. On right and left of the Mother of God are angels playing harps. This icon is named for the Greek pilgrimage site Balikli.

This depiction can also represent the primordial rhomboid symbol of motherhood being overcome by the ideal of the virginity of Mary. In the spaces between the points of the star, there are scenes depicting aspects of the virginity of the Mother of God, such as angels descending Jacob's ladder,[50] the closed gate through which the Redeemer is allowed to pass,[51] the tongue purified by a hot coal,[52] and the three young men in the fiery furnace.[53]

LIFE-GIVING SPRING

Icons with this theme, also called the "Fountain Madonna," are very popular in Byzantium and Greece, but less well-known in Russia. They depict the Mother of God with the Immanuel Child on her lap, both sitting in the huge bowl of a fountain. This theme is the response of the Eastern Church to the numerous pre-Christian sacred springs that were often bound up with spa-like enterprises consecrated to Asclepius. Sometimes the *Zoodochos pege*, the Life-giving Spring, is depicted as the Blacherniotissa icon of the Mother of God, with water flowing out of stigmata-marked hands.

"Rejoice, thou who givest abundantly
that streams of water may flow.
Rejoice, thou who art the living image
of the font.
Rejoice, thou who dost remove
the stain of sin.
Rejoice, bath that cleanseth
our conscience...
Rejoice, Unwedded Bride."
From the Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God

50 Genesis 28:10–16.
51 Ezekiel 44:1–2.
52 Isaiah 6:6–7.
53 Daniel 3.

Right: Comfort of the Woeful, Russian, nineteenth century.
Mary with the child Jesus stands in an aureole composed of angels. Above her is Christ Pantocrator. The woeful being cared for by the angels are not physically ill, but rather suffering from mental illness, and they turn confidently to the Mother of God.

Above: The Mother of God Joy of All Who Suffer, Russian, around 1800.
The original icon, which shows Mary as the refuge for all sufferers, came from Moscow, where it was placed in the Ordinka Church in 1643. In 1711 it was brought to Saint Petersburg, after obtaining notoriety through the healing of a sister of Patriarch Joachim in 1688. This illustration shows a small (30cm x 35cm) icon of Mary with the child Jesus on her arm, standing in front of an egg-shaped aureole in the middle of the portrayal, with a medallion of the Trinity above them. Those seeking help have written their ailments on banners; angels and saintly helpers in need support them in their invocation of the Mother of God.

THE JOY OF ALL WHO SUFFER

This pictorial theme has been depicted on Marian icons since the eighteenth century in Russia and achieved widespread popularity in the nineteenth century. Its appeal is that the Mother of God is not simply portrayed in a statuesque way, but that the sufferings of the faithful are also enumerated in the details. This meant the artists were more independent than they had been in the past. The crowned Mother of God holds the child on her left arm in typical Hodegetria fashion. Both stand inside a carefully embellished mandorla, often underneath an image of the Trinity. Surrounding them is a most diverse group of sufferers with descriptions of their individual sufferings written on scrolls and angels or patron saints leading them to the Mother of God. Most of these valuable icons were produced and disseminated by the famous painting school of Palekh in central Russia.

PROTECTING VEIL (POKROV)

The feast of the Pokrov is an indigenous feast celebrated all over Russia on the first of October. The roots of its legend are again bound up with the famous Blachernae Church in Constantinople. The Fool for Christ Andrew, by birth a Slav, saw a vision, during the midnight service at the Blachernae Church, in which the Mother of God stepped out of the doors of the altar and prayed tearfully for a long time. Andrew spoke to his servant, "Do you see our Lady, the Queen of the world?" "I see her, my spiritual Father," answered the servant Epiphanius. Then they both heard a marvelous hymn, sung by the church choir. After the Mother of God finished her prayers, she spread out her mantle (which, along with her sash, was present in the Blachernae Church) over the people who were present. In Roman antiquity there was a well-known means of granting someone protection—the protector placed his or her *velamentum* (protective cloak) around the person seeking protection, an idea revived in the Marian piety of the Eastern Church in the form of the Pokrov. Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky (d.1174) took the legend of the holy fool Andrew and the Mother of God and developed it into an independent feast, placing the central Russian Empire with its capital city of Vladimir on the Klyasma under the protection of the Mother of God. At the same time he built

"A strong defense for
the downtrodden art Thou,
Immaculate Mother of God,
a sure help, the redemption
and foundation of the world,
origin of grace and source
of divine wisdom, the protection
of the whole world.
We faithfully sing Thy praises
and have thankful hearts
for Thy radiant protective cloak:
Filled with joy, rejoice,
the Lord is with Thee,
the Lord, who through Thee
hast bestowed plentiful grace
on the whole world."

From the Hymn for October 1,
the Feast of the Pokrov of the Mother of God.

one of the most beautiful Churches in central Russia, the Pokrov church on the Nerl River near Vladimir. Soon thereafter two variations of this theme developed in icon painting. The older type, stemming from Vladimir-Suzdal, shows the Mother of God herself holding her protective cloak over the faithful. The later type stems from Novgorod and spread throughout northern Russia. It depicts two angels holding the protective cloak over Mary while Christ blesses it. Others mentioned in the legend are also on the icons—the holy fool Andrew is recognizable in his ascetic garb, speaking with his servant Epiphanius.

Left: The Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (Pokrov), School of Rostov, sixteenth century. Andrew, Fool for Christ, had a vision of the Mother of God at night in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople, in which she spread out her veil over the faithful gathered there. This feast has been depicted often on Russian icons since the fourteenth century. The feast of the Mother of God Pokrov is on the first of October; because Saint Romanus the Melodist, a composer of hymns, is also commemorated on the same day, he is frequently seen at the chanter's lectern on the Pokrov icons.

Right: The Mother of God Pokrov, Russian, seventeenth or eighteenth century. Andrew, the Fool for Christ, is at the bottom on the right pointing out the Mother of God to his friend Epiphanius. The scenes on the left edge and at the bottom in the middle concern the hymnographer, Romanus the Melodist.

The Greek word *angelos* (in many languages the source of the word for "angel") means "a commissioned messenger," and includes the idea of a heavenly diplomatic corps. As a sign of their ambassadorial status, angels often are depicted with staves and scrolls. Angels are spiritual beings, appearing to humans, however, as young boys or mature men. The idea of wings on angels comes from late Greek antiquity. Depictions of winged children *(putti)*, as they were developed in the West during the baroque period, were unknown in the East. The Assyrians knew about messengers of the gods *(genii)* in human form, as well as bird-headed winged creatures. References to spiritual beings (in particular those that influence the human liver) are present in all religions, including the so-called primitive religions. In the late writings of the Old Testament and in early Jewish literature these intermediaries between God and the world increase significantly in number and have a variety of functions (such as interpreting, protecting, accompanying, or interceding) and also many designations (such as the Powers, Dominions, Thrones, Principalities, and Virtues mentioned in the New Testament). Of fundamental importance for later Christian teaching about angels was its systematization, accomplished in the sixth century by an influential theologian and mystic. Though his true identity is not known, he referred to himself as the Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in Acts 17:34, and, for that reason, he is often simply called the Pseudo-Dionysius or the Areopagite. According to him, the innumerable angelic powers are organized in divinely good order into three hierarchies (also called triads). These may be ranked as follows, from the highest to the lowest (Greek designations are in parentheses):

First Triad or hierarchy: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones *(thronoi)*.

Second Triad or hierarchy: Dominions *(kyriotetes)*, Powers *(dynameis)*, and Virtues *(exousiai)*.

Third Triad or hierarchy: Principalities *(archai)*, Archangels *(archangeloi)*, and Angels *(angeloi)*.

The first Triad stands directly before God's throne, whose glory appears as "superluminescent" darkness. The Areopagite does not describe the appearance of the separate hierarchies; his ideas about them remain in the realm of pure abstract thought. The Old Testament, on the other hand, does give some visual impressions of the highest ranks. About the Seraphim (Hebrew for "the burning ones"), we read in Isaiah 6:1–2: "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim were in attendance above him; each had six wings; with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew." And the Prophet Ezekiel had this vision: "As I looked, a stormy wind came out of the north: a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, something like gleaming amber. In the middle of it was something like four living creatures. This was their appearance: they were of human form. Each had four faces and each of them had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: their wings touched one another; each of them moved straight ahead, without turning as they moved. As for the appearance of their faces: the four had the face of a human being, the face of a lion on the right side, the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle."[54]

The Eastern Church prescribed the veneration (not the adoration) of the angels along with images at the Seventh Ecumenical Council held at Nicaea in 787. The conceptual connection between angels and images is apparent—in its essence the invisible, supernatural world of the angels is realized in their ministry to humankind, and so this angelic world is open to human experience. We will now demonstrate this concretely by considering the archangels venerated by the Eastern Church: Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel.

GABRIEL

According to Daniel (chapters 8 and 9), Gabriel (Hebrew for "strong man of God"), is described as interpreter and exegete[55] of the visions of the prophets. He appears "like the form of a man," who in "hurried flight" approaches the prophet. In the New Covenant he is the messenger commissioned by God to announce the birth of Christ to

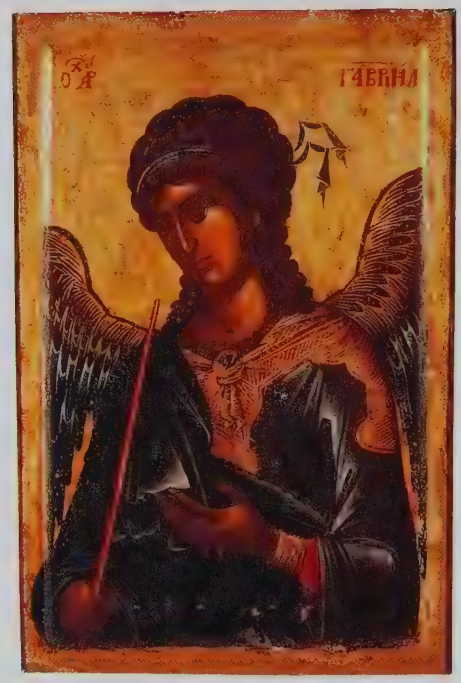
Above: A Seraph, Byzantine Mosaic, thirteenth century.
With three pairs of wings covered with eyes, the Seraph stands on winged wheels of fire. On the right and left and above his head are the signs of the Evangelists: the lion for Mark, the ox for Luke, the eagle for John, and the angel himself as a symbol for Matthew.

Page 178: Archangel with Angelic Scenes (Voevoda[56]), Old Believer workshop in central Russia, nineteenth century.
In the center of this icon we see the Archangel Michael with a rainbow over his head as he gets ready to blow the trumpet for judgment. The scenes on the sides illustrate (from left to right): *First row:* the fall of the angels; their assembly in honor of the Archangel Michael; the rescue of Isaac; Michael appearing to Joshua and commanding him to remove his shoes. *Second row:* Michael appears to Gideon; Michael helps in the battle against the Midianites. *Third row:* Michael and Bileam; an angel shows Elijah the jug of water. *Fourth row:* Michael protects the Three Young Men in the fiery furnace; and an angel and Habakkuk bring nourishment to Daniel in the lions' den. Michael frees Peter from prison; the miracle of Chonae.

54 Ezekiel 1:4–10.

55 Latin *angelus interpres*, "angel-exegete."

56 Editor's Note: *voevoda* is Russian for "commanding general," in this case of the Heavenly Host. The Greek equivalent is *archistrategos*.



Left: The Archangel Gabriel, Hilandar, around 1360.
The archangel is shown in half-figure with his messenger's staff, which reminds us of his lofty job of announcing the message of God to the Virgin Mary. This is a deësis-level icon of an iconostasis, since his face is turned slightly to the side and his hand is raised in petition.

Right: Archangel Michael as Rider of the Apocalypse, Russian, nineteenth century.
With outstretched arms the archangel has just landed sitting on his winged horse. In his left hand he holds the Book of Life, and with his right hand he brings the trumpet to his lips to announce the Last Judgment.

Mary and the birth of John the Forerunner to Zachariah in the temple. According to one apocryphal tradition, he ministered to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. Gabriel also plays an important role in Islam; he brought Mohammed the revelations and commandments of Allah.

In the art of the Eastern Church and according to the formulas in the *Painters' Manual*, Gabriel is depicted as a young man with the staff of a messenger (at his side frequently a scepter) and orb. The lily in his hand as a symbol of virginity did not find its way from the West into painting of the East until later.

MICHAEL

Michael (Hebrew for "Who is like God?") is—if in God's will there were such a thing—the highest warlord of the angels, the "banner-carrier of Christ," as the *Legenda Aurea* describes him. In view of the constant unrest in the world, he also has the most to do in trying to establish peace and harmony. As a precautionary measure God has given him the keys to heaven. But that is just the beginning of his protective, security-maintaining duties, for as in the Old Covenant he was intercessor for Israel, so in the New he is an intercessor for all of Christianity. At the same time, however, Michael is the angel of judgment, the angel of justice. He accompanies the souls of the deceased and weighs them on the scales of the souls; like Saint George, Michael defeats the dragon, the supreme symbol of barbarity and paganism. He also appears as the equerry of the holy horse shepherds, Florus and Laurus.

The veneration of Michael was already established in the fourth century in Phrygia in Asia Minor, especially at Chonae. Chonae is only a few kilometers from the city of Colossae, where the Apostle Paul warned the Christians not to over-emphasize the veneration of angels.[57] It is reported

Left: The Archangel Michael, Macedonia, around 1600.
Michael stands as victor with both feet on an enemy whom he has overcome and pierced with his sword. The archangel Michael functions as the military commander of the angelic hosts, with whom he has overcome Satan and his accomplices, and is also seen as a fellow combatant in the earthly battles of Orthodox believers against the attacks of heathens. The Archangel Michael is venerated as a national mediator in Russia and in Germany.

Right: The Archangel Michael, Yaroslavl, around 1300.
Here Michael is not depicted as a warrior, but rather in his sublime beauty as the Prince of Angels. In his left hand he holds an image of Christ Immanuel, in his right hand a staff symbolizing his sovereignty. Cloak and shoes are painted in imperial vermilion; the red-brown dalmatic and his belt are embellished with gems. Michael's face glows in the light of the red flames.

of Chonae that a priest there, named Archippos, was the guardian of a cultic shrine in honor of Michael, and that when the heathens attempted to destroy this shrine by damming two rivers, the archangel Michael intervened personally. The *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos* describes the scene: "Michael saves his temple from a flood. A temple; in it Archippos, an old man with a pointed beard; in front of him Michael, striking the foundation of the temple with a lance and splitting a cliff. Two rivers stream from above, merge in front of the temple and then flow into the crevice. At the top of the mountain people with hoes and spades clear out the river bed."

The emblems of this usually youthful, in later times often somewhat feminine, archangel are a headband with a precious, gleaming diadem, liturgical vestments on cultic occasions (at the Last Judgment, for example), the staff of a messenger, an orb (with or without a cross) in his left hand, and armor (during military campaigns).

RAPHAEL

According to the *Legenda Aurea*, Raphael (Hebrew for "God has healed") belongs to that group of angels "who have the power to subdue everything repulsive." Raphael's

57 Colossians 2:18.

powers are entwined with the touching story of Tobias and Sarah in the Book of Tobias (or Tobit). Raphael is truly a congenial family angel, without the worldwide sphere of influence encompassing heaven, earth, and underworld like his colleagues. Raphael, seldom alone, is usually depicted with other archangels. The emblems of his rank are cross and staff.

URIEL

Uriel (Hebrew for "light or fire of God") is only mentioned in non-canonical books such as Enoch and the Fourth Book of Ezra. He usually appears with other archangels. Uriel guards the gate to paradise, he opens the gate to the underworld, and he accompanies the deceased to the throne of God; he is the angel of punishment and penance. Because he was only mentioned in non-canonical books, his veneration was forbidden in the West, although he appears on early Christian monuments as early as the fourth century. Artists in the East have also been hesitant to depict him. The occasional scenes in which he figures stem from apocryphal writings and show him accompanying a youthful John the Baptist through the desert. His emblems are the sword or flame.

GUARDIAN ANGELS

The Church Fathers understood all angels as *ministri Dei*, Latin for "minister," "servant," or "agent" of God. The angelic powers were not contemplated for themselves, but rather on the basis of their divine commissions for human beings. Gabriel and Michael were considered to be guardian angels *par excellence*, despite their universal activities. The guardian angel motif has been portrayed in a variety of ways, frequently quite lovingly as, for example, with depictions of the Holy Family's flight to Egypt. The Eastern Church never systematized the tasks of the corps of guardian angels as thoroughly as the Western Church did. The former is quite satisfied to see angels function as *ministeri Dei*. In the daily life of Orthodox believers, everyone has his or her own personal guardian angel, whatever his name might be.

THE SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGELS AND ALL BODILESS POWERS

It is understandable that there was a yearning for a celebration incorporating the veneration of all the angelic powers. Around the year 1000, the Church established two feast days for this purpose: the eighth of November for the archangel Michael and all Bodiless Powers, and the twenty-sixth of March for the Archangel Gabriel and all Bodiless Powers.

Above: The Synaxis of the Angels, fresco (detail), Athos, 1603.
Standing in front of a harmoniously grouped host of the Bodiless Powers, the three angelic Princes, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, hold a medallion with a bust of Christ as a young man in their hands. Beneath the Synaxis (or Assembly) of angels we see Satan, the former Angel of Light, overthrown. On the scroll hanging down from the clipeus of Christ we read Luke 10:18, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning."

Page 182: The Synaxis (Assembly) of the Holy Archangels, Novgorod, end of the 15th. C.
Seventeen archangels are grouped to the right, left, and above a medallion depicting the bust of a youthful Christ in a gesture of benediction. At the center of this Synaxis of the Archangels, the clipeus of the Son of God, embedded in an aureole and towards which the angels look and gesture, hovers between two six-winged seraphim.

Left: Mother of God The Prophets Have Foretold Thee, Russian, seventeenth century.
Mary sits enthroned in the middle of the painting. Above her in the clouds is Christ Immanuel as the pre-existent Logos. The Mother of God is surrounded on each side by six prophets, on whose scrolls she is praised as the Virgin Mother of the Son of God. The name and scene of this icon correspond to a Marian hymn. The oldest depictions of this theme stem from the fifteenth century.

Right: King Solomon, Russian, seventeenth century
Icon painters liked to portray David's wise son and successor as youthful and handsome with an opened scroll. In the Book of Kings[58] we read, "He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five."

People and events from the Old Testament are found in practically all areas of the art of the primitive Church. Book illumination was a particularly important medium for Christian exposition of the Old Testament using interpretive images. The fact that there are so many illustrated Bible manuscripts in the Eastern Church is a sign of their popularity and dissemination. Let us consider here just one example: In the illustrations around a copy of the Psalms of David, we find associations with Christ,[59] such as Christ rising from the grave with David standing nearby in a variety of postures. It is no exaggeration to say that Byzantine Bible illustration was the "well" from which for centuries the conceptual meaning of and aesthetic principles for portraying saints of the Old Covenant sprang.

Even the few references to King David show that the primitive Church understood the saints of the Old Testament literally as Christ's "assistants." A glance at the iconography of the Feasts of Christ is enough to confirm this fact: The Prophet Isaiah is present at the birth of Jesus[60] and, in view of his victory over death and Satan in the underworld, the prophets of the Old Covenant (his proclaimers in the past), led by John the Forerunner, are always present on one side of the risen Lord; on his other side, the apostles, evangelists, and a church father of the East. On the mountain of the Transfiguration, in accordance with the accounts in the gospels, Jesus is always flanked by Moses and Elijah (see page 108).

The icon of the Trinity (see page 142) is a good example of how the Christian imagination and the Christian world of images grew out of the original soil of the Old Testament. The depiction of this absolutely central dogma of the Christian faith, which distinguishes it from all other religions, has its roots in the Genesis story of the visit of three angels with Abraham in the grove of Mamre. Another very crucial scene is Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, at first commanded and then prevented by God (Genesis 22), a primordial and anticipatory image of the sacrifice of Christ on Golgotha through God the Father.

The Bosom of Abraham is another visual motif based on Luke 16:19–31, showing

Lazarus and often other naked figures in Abraham's lap. This icon belongs to the larger thematic circle of images of paradise. Sometimes Isaac and Jacob are depicted with the depiction of Abraham's Bosom, reflecting the way the liturgical order of the Eastern Church reserves the week before the birth of Christ for the memorial of the three Patriarchs or Forefathers. Saints of the Old Testament also appear in connection with the Marian portrayals, as we have already seen, such as Moses on the Mother of God icon, The Burning Bush (page 174), or prophetic predictions about Mary on the

symbolic and allegorical portrayal The Prophets Foretold Thee (page 184).

The Prophet Elijah, whose story is told in the Books of Kings,[61] is one of the few individuals of the Old Covenant who is depicted alone on icons. His "image-worthiness" comes from his exemplary character during the concluding events of salvation in the New Testament: Like Jesus, Elijah was a great wandering Evangelist; he raised the son of a widow to life; and he ascended into heaven. "As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven."[62] This scene, along with his departure from his disciple Elisha, was adapted by artists as an effective motif just as readily as the depiction of the Prophet being fed by ravens in the desert, a scene which calls to mind Jesus in the desert.

58 I Kings 4:32.
59 Psalm 2:7.
60 See in particular Isaiah 7:13–14.
61 I Kings 17-19;21 and II Kings 1:1–17.
62 II Kings 2:11.

Left: King David, Russian, 17th C.
King David, wearing exquisite royal garments, is portrayed as a sovereign who demands respect. The writing on his banner is a quotation from Psalm 45:10, "Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear."

Right: The Prophet Elijah, Russian, 19th C.
Under the fiery cloud in which Elijah is being transported to heaven in a chariot drawn by four winged horses, we see scenes from his life. *Above left:* Elijah being fed by a raven. *Below left:* the mortally exhausted Elijah in the desert where he wants to die, and an angel giving him courage to live. *Lower right:* Elijah and his disciple Elisha standing on the bank of the Jordan. Elijah strikes the water with his cloak so that they may cross over without getting their feet wet.

Спасъ
Іоан. Лука. Іоан. Іоаннъ бог.
апо. Пе
тръ. апо.
Павелъ.
Іоан. Матфей. Іоан. Марко.
Апо. филиппъ. Апо. Іаковъ. Апо. Андрей первозв. Апо. Симонъ. Апо. Вардоломей. Апостолъ Ѳома.

The word "apostle" in English combines all three meanings of the original Greek word *apostolos*, "messenger," "emissary," and "traveler," whereas "evangelist," from the Greek *euangelistes*, means simply "proclaimer of a good, even a joyous message."

The New Testament concept of the office and function of an apostle is influenced by Jewish law that "the emissary of a person is as the person him or herself." This is evinced in numerous passages, as when Jesus says, "Truly, truly I say to you, the servant is not greater than his master and the emissary is not greater than he who sent him." That means that the office of apostle, or the apostolate, is a juridical institution established by Jesus in which the emissaries are obligated to "report back." After returning from their commission as "evangelists" in Galilee, "the apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught."[63] The importance of the juridical foundation of the primitive Christian apostolate for the later development and history of all denominations of the Church should not be underestimated. It was this foundation that kept under control the fanatical idea of a purely "spiritual" Church. This idea of a Church without structure or with little structure has surfaced again and again since the earliest days of Christianity. Such "enthusiastic" movements tend to base their case on Pentecost, which may be considered a second, non-juridical authorization of the apostles.

The concept of "evangelist" is quite different. As already stated, the evangelist is a proclaimer of the Good News. In contrast to "apostle," "evangelist" is not the title of an office but rather an occupation, in a narrower sense, that of author of a book written to disseminate the "Good News." This job of author is described very precisely by Luke: "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I, too, decided, after investigating everything very carefully from the first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed."[64] Here in this passage we see the beginning of the transition of the Gospel from oral to written tradition, the making of the Gospel into a book: the eyewitnesses, the trustworthy tradition of the witnesses to the words and deeds of Jesus, the ordering and writing down of the entire corpus of the material which has been handed down. Since the middle of the second century, the four Gospels have been recognized as "canonical," as binding, God's very own authorized witness to the revelation in Jesus Christ, that is, as sacred scripture. Along with this, there also was a standard by which to differentiate and separate scripture proper from "apocryphal" writings, which claimed to contain secret knowledge about Jesus. The rather strange narratives and novel-like embellishments of these writings were extremely popular, despite ecclesiastical efforts to control them. Numerous motifs in the unfolding of the Christian world of images, however, have their roots in this apocryphal literature.

PENTECOST

First let us consider what we have already called the second authorization of the apostolate, Pentecost,[65] as it is described in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. While according to John 20:22, Jesus bestowed upon his disciples the Holy Spirit by breathing on them to grant the power of office, the same thing occurs according to the Acts of the Apostles in the sense of a divinely authorized outpouring of the Spirit. "Divided tongues as of fire appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability."[66] The "ecumenical" aspect becomes visible here when it is reported that the representatives of all the peoples gathered understood the spiritual outpouring in their own languages—an "audiovisual" miracle. Prototypes in the Old Testament may be found in the renewal of the Covenant according to Exodus 19, as well as old traditions about the many voices of the divided tongues of God on Mount Sinai during the delivery of the Law to Moses.

All evidence indicates that the feast of Pentecost was celebrated by Christians quite early in Jerusalem and Palestine. Up to the fourth century it was celebrated, together with the Ascension of Christ, on the Mount of Olives, as the liturgical con-

Page 186: The Synaxis of the Apostles, Moscow or Palekh, end of the 18th C.
In two rows, one on top of the other, we see six apostles in each row, standing facing the beholder in frontal view. Peter, third from the left in the upper row, is characterized by a ring of keys; all the others are pointing to Gospel books on their arms. Jesus Christ hovers above a band of clouds as Lord and Master of the apostles, and stretches both arms out over them in benediction.

Above: The Evangelist Luke as Portrait Painter of the Mother of God, Serbian, 17th C.
According to legend, the Evangelist Luke painted several portraits of Mary with the Son of God at the home of the Holy Family in Nazareth. Here he is at work painting at an easel with a nearly finished icon.

63 Mark 6:30.
64 Luke 1:1–4.
65 From the Greek *pentekoste hemera*, "the fiftieth day (after Easter)."
66 Acts 2:3 *f.*

clusion of the fifty days after Easter. The oldest portrayals of the feast of Pentecost show Mary in the circle of the apostles, over whose heads tongues of fire appear, whereby the Mother of God was understood as the symbolic figure for Mother Church. Starting in the ninth century a pictorial pattern developed in which representatives of the evangelized gentiles also appear in addition to the twelve apostles; in place of these gentile representatives there soon appeared an old man with twelve scrolls, symbolizing the universe.

In Russia, Pentecost Sunday has been understood since the fourteenth century as the conclusion of the events of salvation in Christ, and the icon of the Holy Trinity was venerated as the icon of the feast of Pentecost, the Monday after Pentecost being reserved for the memorial of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles with its corresponding icons.

THE NUMBER TWELVE FOR THE APOSTLES

Although the number twelve is confirmed in the New Testament,[67] the actual lists of names are not always consistent.[68] Obviously, with the exception of the chief apostles, Peter and Paul, it was not the individual persons who were important, but rather the number twelve as such. The number twelve is highly symbolic; the symbolism that is intended is the twelve tribes of Israel. Above and beyond that, the number twelve plays an important role in the symbolic memory of all peoples. It is the absolute number of perfection and completion: twelve signs of the *zodiacus*,[69] twelve Tables of the Law of the Romans, twelve years for the completion of childhood and the beginning of legal age in Judaism, twelve gates of the heavenly city,[70] twelve months of the year, and so on.

ICONS OF THE APOSTLES UNACCOMPANIED

Single portraits are part of the tradition of portrait painting in late antiquity. Groups of four became standard early on, such as Peter, Paul, John, and Andrew. This grouping is significant in church politics: Constantine's founding of the *Nea Roma*, the New Rome on the Bosporus, created by definition a competitive situation with the old Rome. It also influenced the question of whether the Bishop of Rome has preeminence, primacy. As Rome legitimized its leading role with Peter, the first of the apostolic circle and the first Roman bishop, so Constantinople pointed to Andrew, who appointed the first bishop of the Nea Roma and thereby established Constantinople as *sedes apostolica*, as an apostolic see. The unfolding of this privilege can be seen in old Russian chronicles in which it is reported that Andrew, standing high above the Dnieper, prophesied a glorious future for Kiev and then returned by way of Novgorod to Rome.

Since the beginnings of Christian art Peter and Paul have been portrayed very differently. The early Sinai icons from the sixth century demonstrate a realism that influenced the West for quite some time, even as late as the portraits of Albrecht Dürer. In the East, on the other hand, the pictorial types were individually formalized in the tenth century. *Peter*, with a subdued countenance and gray hair and beard; *Paul*, with a fiery countenance, a prominent, hairless forehead, and black hair and beard; *John* (in the East always called "the Theologian") appears within Orthodox circles as an old man with snow-white hair and beard, based on the mysterious remarks of Jesus that this disciple will "remain until I come"[71] and on the apocryphal tradition that he died at the ripe old age of 120 on the island of Patmos, after dictating the Gospel to his secretary Prochorus following the Great Vigil of Easter. The West, on the other hand, quite frequently in heated polemic against the East, preferred a youthful apostle and evangelist, and for good reasons, which we will not go into now. The last of the apostolic quartet is *Andrew*. In Orthodox circles he is given the title *protokletos*, "the First-called," because, according to John 1:40–42, he was called by Jesus to discipleship before Simon Peter. This and parallel accounts are early evidence of people highly interested and actively involved in religious questions. The oldest examples of Christian art around 500 depict Andrew as a mature man with graying, uncombed hair and beard. His wide-open eyes beneath bushy brows are meant to express his passionate nature. The realism of the early Christian portrayals of this apostle, fascinating still today, gave way to more subdued depictions during the Byzantine period.

Page 188: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Tver, middle of the fifteenth century.
This icon is from the feast-day level of an iconostasis. The apostles sit on a horseshoe-shaped bench, with Peter and Paul facing each other in the middle. Above them the rays of the Holy Spirit descend from the celestial sphere. In the center at the bottom of the painting is a dark arch with the half-figure of someone royally robed; this person holds a white cloth on which there are twelve scrolls. This is a personification of the cosmos, holding in readiness the Gospel scrolls in various languages for the missionary activity of the apostles.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Detail from the left panel of a diptych, Venetian, around 1366 to 1371.
This circular depiction, in which six apostles sit opposite each other around and above a

shimmering light-flooded vault, is thoroughly irradiated by the golden fiery beam of the Holy Spirit. The apostles hold their hands open to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and incorporate these gifts in themselves.

67 John 6:67 and I Corinthians 15:5.
68 Matthew 10:2–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16; and Acts 1:13.
69 Latin for "horoscope."
70 Revelation 21:12.
71 John 21:22.

Above: The Apostles Peter, Paul, Andrew, and John, Greek, sixteenth century.
On this divided icon the Princes of the Apostles, Peter (with wavy hair) and Paul (with a high forehead), face each other at the top. In the bottom section Andrew (with unkempt hair revealing his temperament) gazes directly at the beholder, while the apostle and Evangelist John, depicted as an old man, looks off into the distance, lost in thought, it seems, about his Gospel.

Right: The Royal Doors of an Iconostasis, Moscow, around 1600.
In an arched frame at the very top we see the Annunciation with the angel Gabriel at the left and the Virgin Mary at the right. The doors below them contain four panels depicting the four evangelists, each writing his Gospel, along with their corresponding symbols on smaller, vertical panels above their images: the lion for Mark, the ox for Luke, the angel for Matthew, and the eagle for John.

Detail of the picture on the left.

Left: The Evangelist Matthew, Ochrid, fourteenth century.
Matthew is portrayed as a dignified older man reading in his Gospel book while walking, indicated by the position of his feet and his flowing garment. He wears a blue *chiton* with taupe *himation* , creating a very genteel effect.

Right: The Evangelist Mark, Hilandar, around 1360.
This icon shows Mark in half-figure and three-quarter profile facing right. It was part of the Evangelist Group on a deësis level. With studied deliberation, he holds an ornate Gospel book embellished with precious gems.

When we turn our attention to the other apostles, we see that contrary to what we have seen of the West, with the exception of a biblical book (codex) in the hand of the evangelists, in the East the apostles were not given personal attributes. Moreover, the depiction of the apostles developed slowly. The brief instructions in the *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos* belong to the late phase of the formalization of portraits of the apostles. They are included here because they are so succinct, but they should not be overrated. The instructions in the *Stroganov Painters' Manual* agree in general with those in the Athos manual. The few differences are noted.

A pictorial list of the apostles, excluding the Big Four: (The abbreviation AM stands for the Athos Manual, SM for the *Stroganov Manual*).

James "the Great,"[72] originally middle-aged with a dark beard, in the AM "young with nascent beard."

James "the Less,"[73] the *adelphotheos,* or Brother of God, first bishop of Jerusalem; according to the AM "an old man with curly, parted hair," an instruction painters did not always obey.

Philip: youthful, beardless, in contrast to the West where he is depicted as a mature, sometimes elderly, man.

Bartholomew: short, graying hair and beard in the older versions, in the AM: "young with nascent beard."

Matthew: In the AM an old man with a long, full beard, lightly wavy hair and a long, drooping mustache.

Thomas: youthful and beardless like Philip (in the West, from the Middle Ages on, with beard.)

Simon "Zelotes" (Simon the Zealot): Since the AM characterizes him as an "old man with a bald head and a rounded beard," there were obviously regional variations in beards in the East, as in the position of the head, which often showed the energetic, zealous side of his personality.

Jude: In the AM youthful with nascent beard; in the SM an older man with a long, parted beard.

Matthias: An apostle chosen after the Ascension of Christ to take the place of Judas in the circle of "the Twelve" (Acts 1:23–26), who traditionally belonged to "the Seventy." The commemoration of the Seventy is celebrated only in Orthodox areas and in Ethiopia on the fourth of January. He appears as a bald man in his best years.

72 *Iacobus maior.*
73 *Iacobus minor.*

Below: The Fathers of the Church, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nazianzus, Thrace, around 1600.
In contrast to the Western Church, the Orthodox Church of the East has recognized very few Fathers, primarily (from left to right): Basil the Great (330–379), John Chrysostom (347–407), and Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390). This icon (upper section of a six-figured depiction) shows the three Fathers of the Church in the gesture of benediction, with a book of Gospels under their left arms.

Right: Saint John Chrysostom, Russian, sixteenth or seventeenth century.
This representative depiction of the holy teacher of the Church is most likely an icon of the deësis level of an iconostasis. People gave John the epithet "Chrysostomos," or "Golden-mouthed," because his sermons were greatly acclaimed for their content and style. Saint John Chrysostom is also the author of a liturgy named after him, and, for a while, was Patriarch of Constantinople. This beloved Father of the Church met his downfall because of the ecclesiastical and political opposition of Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, in addition to the fact that he was not in the favor of Empress Eudocia. He died in 407 on his way to his place of banishment on the eastern shore of the Black Sea.

In contrast to the Roman Catholic West, the Eastern Church has neither a concept nor term for Church Fathers. While in the West there were theological teachers outside of the hierarchy of the Church, in the East dogmatic reflection was intimately bound up with the office of bishop. This corresponds to the episcopal structure of the individual Orthodox Churches, which does not recognize a highest teaching authority like the Pope, but rather looks to the seven Ecumenical Councils as the standard of teaching: Nicaea I in 325, Constantinople I in 381, Ephesus in 431, Chalcedon in 451, Constantinople II in 553, Constantinople III in 680 (Constantinople II and III were summarized and expanded by the Synod of 692, called the Synod "in Trullo," named for the domed hall of the imperial palace in Constantinople), and Nicaea II in 787. The Ecumenical Councils have also been depicted in Eastern art.

There were also lay persons in Byzantium, non-theologians who made remarkable theological achievements. One of these lay persons, Simeon Metaphrastes, wrote the *Menologion*, or Monthly Book of Saints (still used today), but was not canonized for this. It is characteristic for the East that both of the Orthodox liturgies are named for two of these Fathers (Basil and John Chrysostom), a fact that shows the essential connection between teaching (theology) and divine worship, including the sacraments.

The names of some of the most prominent teachers of the East are: *Basil the Great* (d. 379), Bishop of Caesarea, author of a liturgy used on certain feast days, and named for him, as well as writings on theology and ascetics; *Gregory of Nyssa* (d. 394), brother of Basil and Bishop of Nyssa, and the most significant of the four "Fathers;" *Gregory of Nazianzus* (died around 390), for a time Bishop of Constantinople and eminent ascetic theologian of the early Church; *John "Chrysostomos,"* the "golden-mouthed" (d. 407 on his way into banishment), most

Left: Saint Basil the Great, Macedonia, 1699. Saint Basil sits enthroned in a columned niche against a golden background. His right hand is raised in blessing. In his left hand he holds an open Gospel book for the faithful to see. Like Chrysostom, Basil also wrote a liturgy which was named after him. The splendor of this icon is a witness to the great respect given to Basil as the proclaimer of the orthodox faith.

famous preacher of the early Church, Patriarch of Constantinople, a victim of ecclesiastical and imperial intrigues banished to the eastern shore of the Black Sea, after Basil the author of the second Orthodox liturgy, which, with very few exceptions, is celebrated every day. Both of these liturgists appear on the deësis level of the iconostasis (see page 218 f) after the Mother of God, John the Forerunner, the archangels and the apostles on both sides of the Christ as Judge and King; Gregory of Nazianzus is frequently also included. In addition, the first two, Basil and John Chrysostom, are on the Royal Doors.

The facial depictions of these bishops and teachers of the Church are unmistakable and easily recognized: Gregory of Nazianzus, also called "the Theologian," and author of the Proskimidia or Liturgy of the Preparation of the Holy Gifts, performed before the beginning of the Byzantine liturgy, is depicted with a broad face, gray hair, and a rectangular beard; Basil, with large eyes in a slender face, and moderately long pointed beard; John Chrysostom with a round, almost egg-shaped head, dark hair and beard. Sunken cheeks frequently characterize the ascetics. Gregory of Nyssa is described in the *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos* briefly as "an old man with a short beard." The individual icons often depart from this formalism. A special kind of representation is seen in icons of the type called The Three Hierarchs, Basil, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian.

Above: The Three Hierarchs, Fathers of Eastern Orthodoxy, Moscow, fifteenth or sixteenth century.
If we compare these three standing bishops with the three hierarchs illustrated on the icon of the opposite page, it is easy to discern which saints are depicted here. John Chrysostom, with an ascetically thin face and short beard, is in the middle. To the left is Basil with his long, pointed beard; to the right, Gregory, with rounded head and wide beard. In contrast to paintings of the saints in the West, these icons do not depict the attributes identifying each particular saint; in the East they are known to the faithful by their physical appearance, hair style, and clothing.

Page 195: Saint Simeon the Stylite, Greek, 1664.
Even today it is meaningful and understandable that some people retreat temporarily to the desert or to a hermitage in order to devote themselves completely to God. But it seems to us unnatural and absurd to make a platform on top of a pillar "home," and to stay there for years on end. In fact, there were many such "stylites" or "pillar saints," who practiced this form of asceticism. The most renowned is Saint Simeon. This icon shows him encircled by angels high on his platform, which has been fenced in for his protection. Below, a woman with a rosary in her right hand holds on to the pillar and requests his intercession. Whole pilgrimages were made to this pillar saint; even a Byzantine emperor came to him for counsel. Because Stylites practiced three monastic ideals (staying in one place, having no roof overhead, and standing before God), while they were alive they were considered intercessors with whom God was well pleased.

Asceticism," from its original Greek linguistic root, means "effort" or "training." The concept was originally used in the world of sports and the military. Asceticism describes a behavioral pattern or a lifestyle, which a person has either chosen voluntarily or which has been chosen for him by others. A certain separation and even aloofness from family and the rest of society often lends an elitist element to the concept. In this sense, a monastery could be called a "spiritual boot camp." The Russian Church calls its great ascetics *podvizniki*, "disciplined strugglers" or "heroic fighters."

The rich variety of expressions of ascetic life is in no way limited to Christianity. A lively affirmation of life is the essence of humanness, as is finding peace for the soul. It is interesting to note that the ascetic life, leaving the world, has not always been the result of an "end of the world" mentality. In fact, just the opposite is true: It is precisely at the high points of life, in the midst of successes, that a person sometimes no longer rejoices in life. That seems to be the reason for the ascetic life in all the great world religions and in many philosophies, the traditions of which reach back into antiquity; and this applies to Judaism and Christianity, as well as Islam, all influenced by ascetic ideas. The most renowned ascetic of world religions is most certainly Buddha. He turned from the world without compromise, and lived in constant meditative concentration on Nirvana, the eternal peace unending, allowing no one and nothing to interrupt him.

Before looking more closely at the saints, we would like to mention one important point. In contrast to the West, the saints of the Eastern Church do not have many attributes associated with them. A more distinct formalization of facial expression and posture took the place of these attributes. Even the shape of beards plays a role. All of these standards and characteristics of the saints were recorded succinctly in the *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos.* These set standards enabled believers to recognize with certainty their favorite and trusted saints.

THE STYLITES (PILLAR SAINTS)

One of the most bizarre forms of asceticism, cultivated primarily in the Orient, was to escape from the world by climbing to the top of a pillar. Other ascetics, known as Dendrites or Tree People, escaped to the tops of trees.[74] Both groups united two aspirations of asceticism: distance from the temptations to sin in the world of human beings, and closeness to God. The holy Pillar Saints built their pillars higher and higher and lived on small platforms at the top. Water and bread prepared by their admirers on the ground were pulled up on rope. The Dendrites led similar lives. The Pillar Saint most renowned in the West and the East was Simeon (d. 459). A Byzantine emperor once made a pilgrimage to him to ask his advice on theological questions. An elaborate shrine was built around his pillar after his death. Although the shrine was destroyed by Moslems, the venerated pillar was still standing in 1667. Simeon the Stylite appears quite frequently in icon painting; a favorite motif having been a small pitcher of water he pulled up from the ground. Dendrites are either unknown in icons or are simply portrayed as Stylites.

"Thou wast a pillar of patience
O venerable one, emulating the forefathers:
Job in his suffering,
Joseph in his temptations,
and the life of the bodiless hosts,
while still in the body, O Simeon,
our Father..."
Troparion for the Feast of St. Simeon on September 1

HERMITS OF THE DESERT AND FOREST

Another form of the endeavor for holiness was the life of a recluse, hermit,[75] or anchorite,[76] a type of asceticism which was viewed with reservation in the Western Church. Widespread in the East, and manifesting itself in a variety of forms, the sainted examples on this type of icon often also enjoyed special veneration. Hermits lived in cells inside as well as outside monasteries.

There are no monastic orders in the Eastern Church where monasteries are individual establishments, each with its own statutes. The northern Russian forests provided sites for influential monasteries known as the "Northern Thebaid," after the settlements of ascetics in the Thebaid region of northern Egypt. So, as many individual ascetics left large monasteries in the Orient to seek refuge and moral steadfast-

74 Dendrite comes from the Greek *dendron*, "a tree."
75 From the Greek *eremos*, "desert" or "wilderness."
76 From the Greek *anachoresis*, "retreat" or "refuge."

Far right: Saint Anthony the Hermit, Greek, sixteenth century.
Thanks to a series of letters and an extremely influential biography written shortly after his death by Athanasius, the great bishop of Alexandria, we know a great deal about this saint, who was born in 250 in upper Egypt, spent many years in the desert, and died in 356. He embodied the ascetic ideal of renunciation, escape from the world, struggle with evil (demons), radical discipleship, and spiritual

search for God. And so, the "star of the desert" became the father of Christian monasticism in the East as well as the West, both in its eremitic or anchorite form, and in the cenobitic or communal form.

Center: Detail of the illustration on the right.

Left: Saint Alypios the Stylite, Greek, 1716.
Like countless other Stylites, Alypios lived on a small platform on top of a pillar unprotected from sun, wind, rain, or cold. The bread and water that believers brought to him were pulled up by a rope. Because of their extreme asceticism, the Stylites were revered as saints during their lifetimes.

ness in the solitude of the desert, the same happened in northern Russia. The colonization of the high northern part of Russia was largely due to an unusual but characteristic "rhythm." First a monastery was built. Once a monastery had developed into a powerful and influential institution, the hermit who sought God in solitude would leave and go further north. New disciples and followers would then group around him, establish a monastery, and in time the cycle would continue.

Other hermits lived alone or as part of a community in abandoned caves or new ones they dug for themselves. This type of asceticism spread from Cappadocia in Asia Minor into southern Russia. The most prominent establishment of these was the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. Its founders, Theodosius (d.1074) and Anthony (d.1073), are still venerated today on icons in Ukraine.

In all Orthodox countries this spiritual elite constituted the moral example for those who, for whatever reasons, could not or would not follow the narrow path of renunciation. An icon of a hermit, placed in the "beautiful corner" of a house, served as an example and as encouragement to follow the path of virtue as much as possible.

THE GREAT CONTEMPLATIVES

Like holy silence in the context of a cult, or wordless prayer in mysticism, silence as a form of renunciation is known in all religions that know and practice asceticism. Since the beginnings of Christian monasticism, silence has been highly valued as a means of mortification and practicing inwardness. Silent asceticism assumes, as do the teachers of wisdom in the Old Testament, and in their wake the early Christian preachers, that the tongue is the most dangerous human temptation. One of the old Fathers of Egyptian monasticism is said to have carried a stone in his mouth for three years, "until he was able to deal adequately with silence." While contemplatives were forming the Carthusian and Trappist monastic orders in the West, in the East this form of radical asceticism remained limited to individuals.

HOLY FOOLS

The exact designation of this group of ascetics is "Fool for Christ's Sake." Very rare in the West and rejected by the Western Church, in the East such ascetic men and women, who claimed to have lost their minds, have been accepted by the Church from the earliest days to the present, and greatly revered. The most famous Russian Fool for Christ was Basil the Blessed, for whom the cathedral on Red Square in Moscow is named (a building as bizarre as this form of asceticism). The holy fools were known and feared for their symbolic actions, with which they criticized bad conditions in Church, state, and society. The basis of this unusual form of asceticism consists in renouncing intelligence for Christ's sake: "If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise."[77]

Left: Saints Prokopy and Ioann of Ustyug, Fools for Christ, Russian, around 1700.
The holy Fools for Christ (in Russian *yurodivye o Khriste*), were not mentally ill, but rather, taking their cue from Paul about "fools for the sake of Christ" and "the rubbish of the world" (1 Corinthians 4:9–13), acted as if they had lost their minds in order to be treated accordingly. They did this not only to conquer human vanity, but also to be able to speak unpleasant truths to ordinary people and the powerful as well. Prokopy was a wealthy merchant who found religion in Novgorod; continuing on to the north, he came to Ustyug where he lived as a fool until he died in 1303. Ioann came from the vicinity of Ustyug, where he lived as a Fool for Christ and was buried in 1494.

Right: Saints Phanurius and Onuphrius, Greek, seventeenth century.
Phanurius was a martyr who was venerated in Crete and Rhodes, shown here in the uniform of a Roman soldier. Next to him is a well-known ascetic who was also revered in the West, the hermit Onuphrius. Onuphrius lived in the fourth century in the Thebaid Desert. He is always shown naked except for a loin cloth made of leaves. His beard was so long and thick that he was able to wrap himself in it like a cloak as protection from the cold.

THE HOMELESS AND HOLY WANDERERS

The origin of this form of asceticism can be found in the New Testament. Extreme examples of this lifestyle were countered by the Church quite early on with monastic establishments that enforced the rule of *stabilitas loci*, "staying in place." In contrast to the West, until very recent times there have been Homeless and Wanderers for Christ's Sake in the East. This style of renunciation should not be confused with that of pilgrims to holy shrines, who follow a given vow. There were, however, pilgrims who wandered from shrine to shrine all their lives, as Christians following the word of the Apostle to remain as "aliens and exiles" on earth.[78]

77 I Corinthians 3:18. Editor's Note: Prince Myshkin, the hero of Dostoyevsky's novel, *The Idiot*, is a Fool for the Sake of Christ.

78 I Peter 2:11. Editor's Note: The most famous of these Holy Wanderers in modern times was the Pilgrim, the protagonist of *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

Left: Saint Demetrius on Horseback, Greek, seventeenth century.
Demetrius, son of a prominent family, served as officer under emperors Diocletian and Maximian. He was decapitated in 303 for converting to Christianity and trying to convert others. Demetrius is usually shown as a young, beardless knight on horseback, getting ready to pierce an enemy with his lance.

Right: Saint Vladimir, the "Equal to the Apostles," with his two sons, Boris and Gleb, Novgorod, end of the fifteenth century.
Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev (978–1015) was given the title of honor, Equal to the Apostles, because he and all of his subjects were baptized and converted to Christianity in 988. After the prince's death, Svyatopolk, one of his many sons, had his brothers Boris and Gleb murdered in order to gain undivided power. Both princely sons (canonized in 1071) are venerated as the first saints of Russia, and are called the "Patient Sufferers" because of their kindness and nonviolent stance toward their murderers.

The national saints, some of whom were also military saints, were well-known princes and leaders, who made great contributions to the life and development of their nations. If they entered a monastery at the end of their lives, they were considered even more venerable. The importance of national saints in the Middle Ages as the crystallization of national identity can hardly be overemphasized. The belief in the protection and intercession which they provided was cause for joyful celebration on the feast days of these saints, and strengthened the collective identity in times of need and peril.

This was not necessarily the case with military saints. Old, reliable accounts of the early Church attest to the fact that there were soldiers in the Roman army who witnessed to their Christian faith in martyrdom. After Christianity had been declared a religion inimical to the state, a purge of untrustworthy elements (Christian soldiers and officers) began. This is the concrete historical background for the soldier saints.

One of the primary national saints of Serbia was Stephen Nemanja (see page 56f.); in Russia we must name Vladimir, "the Equal to the Apostles." (He received this epithet because he led his people to Byzantine rite Christianity in 988.) Directly after him in rank of veneration are his sons, Boris

and Gleb. They are called "patient sufferers" because they were executed in the struggle for the succession of their father in 1015 for the "unity of the kingdom."

The first military saints we mention are the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. Their martyrdom in an Armenian garrison town is one of the most frequently portrayed motifs in icon painting and in Byzantine-Slav miniature art. Saint Demetrius of Thessalonika (Saloniki), who suffered martyrdom under Emperor Maximian (d. 310), is quite a remarkable figure. He was particularly venerated as patron saint in Thessalonika during the invasion of the Slavic tribes. Soon thereafter his cult was adopted by the Slavs themselves, as is evidenced by the shrines in the Kiev area of Russia and the fact that his name is so widely known. Beardless, youthfulness, and curly hair are the characteristics given in the manuals. The figure of Saint George is surrounded by numerous legends. After receiving the highest honors in the Roman army, he is said to have been decapitated in 303. The Christian East counts him among the Great Martyrs. Youthful, without a beard, and with curly hair is how he is described in the painters' manuals.

Top: The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Russian seventeenth century.
Because forty soldiers in the Armenian garrison town of Sebaste refused to renounce their Christian faith, they were sentenced to stand an entire night unclothed in ice-cold water. One after another died, and only one tried to save himself; he went into a warm bathhouse and had a heart attack. The guard was so impressed by the faithfulness of the Christians that he joined them in the ice water and was crowned a martyr as well.

Above: Deësis with George and Demetrius, triptych, Russia, seventeenth century.
On the side panels, we see George on the left killing the dragon and Demetrius on the right killing an enemy with a lance. Both saints are riding toward Christ Pantocrator in the middle of the icon, behind whose throne Mary and John the Forerunner stand in intercessory posture.

Page 200: Saints Boris and Gleb, Russian, second half of the fourteenth century.
With swords in their left hands and the cross of martyrs in their right, two royal sons, Boris and Gleb, stand upright next to each other surrounded by scenes from their lives. When their father, Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev, died, their half-brother Svyatopolk usurped the crown, which should have been given to the oldest son, Yaroslavl. The former feared most of all Boris, who was commander of the army. Boris, however, dismissed the soldiers and wanted to approach Svyatopolk in peace. Svyatopolk had Boris and his younger brother, both sons from the marriage of Vladimir to a Bulgarian woman, "slaughtered like lambs." Although it was a politically motivated murder, Boris and Gleb are venerated because they were so peace-loving.

Right: Saint Demetrius of Thessalonika, Moldavia, end of the sixteenth century.
Demetrius is not shown here in the typical mode on horseback as a victorious officer, but rather in the elegant garb of a Logothete (a leading official) in the court of the princess of Moldavia. According to a legendary biography he was imprisoned in the dungeon of a stadium because of his steadfast Christian faith; he was killed during a gladiator fight. In the background is the figure of Nestorius, whom Demetrius blessed before he went to battle. Demetrius himself was killed while in prison in the year 306 at the order of Emperor Maximian.

Above: Saint Panteleimon, Hilandar, thirteenth century.
The youthful physician with scalpel and a small box containing medicines against a golden background. According to legend, he was the personal physician of the emperor, who was martyred after his conversion because he was denounced by his medical colleagues. During his ordeals he asked God to forgive his executioners. Thus the name Panteleimon ("all-merciful"). He is one of the most popular and most frequently depicted saints of the Eastern Church.

Page 203: Saint Spiridon, Thrace, around 1600.
Spiridon, who was originally a shepherd, is always depicted with a head covering resembling a beehive. Later he became bishop on Cyprus until he died in 348. His relics were transported through Constantinople to Corfu, where they are solemnly venerated. Because Spiridon was a friend of humans and animals, he was also named patron of cattle.

Below: The holy physicians Cosmas and Damian, Russian, fourteenth or fifteenth century.
Cosmas and Damian were brothers and both respected physicians, who treated the poor without remuneration. They were martyred during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Their cult was practiced widely from the fifth century. This icon shows the brothers receiving from heaven the gift of healing in the form of a physician's bag. Both Cosmas and Damian were venerated in the East as well as the West, and they are considered the patron saints of physicians and pharmacists.

This group of protective saints takes us to the center of everyday life and society of the people of long ago. Indeed, the monasteries, with their facilities for the sick, had medically (or at least paramedically) educated personnel. In addition to these facilities there were also numerous doctors in private practice. The fact that physicians' fees were frequently very high, and their services therefore not available to the poor, can be seen in the epithet *anargyroi*, "unmercenary," given to those of their colleagues who were canonized. As far as their ability as doctors was concerned, they used the best traditions of medicine in antiquity and late antiquity. The same was true for the pharmacists (whose profession originated in Asia and Islamic cultural areas). On the other hand, the veneration of holy physicians and pharmacists was also meant to suppress the worship of the pagan gods of health, such as the Dioscuri[79] or Asclepius. The words of Jesus were a constant influence on holy physicians: "It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick."

The most renowned of the anargyroi were Cosmas and Damian, who died a martyr's death. Rome and Byzantium have different identities and dates of their martyrdom. The most prominent shrines were in Constantinople, the goal of pilgrims from many countries. There were often rooms for healthy rest and prayerful meditation in conjunction with these shrines. With Cosmas and Damian we should also mention Saint Panteleimon. The holy physicians are usually depicted with their doctor's cases, tweezers, jars of ointment, and spatulas. They are usually rather young and have an incipient beard growth. The painters' manual describes Panteleimon as being of "handsome form." He is without beard and has a full head of curly hair.

79 Editor's Note: The Dioscuri, or Twins, were the gods Castor and Pollux, the constellation Gemini.

These protective saints bring us quite literally into the parlors of farmers with their unpretentious icons. We come, too, to the houses and castles of the nobility, who could afford to commission costly icons of the patron saints of their herds—usually herds of horses. Icons reflect the social reality of the world in which they were created—to such an extent that the horses being cared for by holy shepherds are often recognizably expensive Arabian studs.

One patron of the herds who enjoyed particular veneration was the physician and martyred bishop of Sebaste, Blasius (Vlasy in Russian). He is seldom seen alone, but

usually depicted with other patron saints of the herd as an "old man with a pointed beard and curly hair." Another patron of the herds was Saint Spiridon, who advanced from shepherd to bishop (d. 346). The icons on which they are portrayed show them sitting on their episcopal thrones, contentedly watching the cattle, sheep, and goats romping in front of them. Spiridon is portrayed with a shepherd's cap and a "long, parted beard." Modest (often spelled Medost in Russian), Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. 630), appears as the protector of cattle from disease. The protective patron saints of horses make up a very distinct group; Florus and Laurus (in Russian Flor and Lavr) were stonemasons who suffered martyrdom under Emperor Hadrian (d. 138). In Russia they became patrons of the herds. They are often depicted on Russian icons with the archangel Michael in the middle, giving them the reins, while the Cappadocian twins, horse shepherds, guard the animals.

Saint George deserves mention here again. He is revered in northern Russia as an "Enlightener," that is, as the epitome of one who brings culture to the backwoods.

Above: Saints Florus and Laurus, School of Novgorod, end of the fifteenth century.
The twin brothers, Florus and Laurus, stand above a black and a white horse, both turned toward the archangel Michael, who had taught them the art of riding. In the lower half of the icon are three men on horseback rounding up the horses; they are Elashippus, Speushippus, and Melashippus, who were pagans at first but later became Christian martyrs like their masters, Florus and Laurus.

2	3a	3b	3c	4
5				9
6		1		10
7				11
8	12a	12b	12c	13

Left: Saint Nicholas, Russian, fourteenth or fifteenth century.
The middle of this biographical (or Vita) icon of the "super saint" shows (1) Nicholas receiving from Christ *(the medallion at the left)* the Gospel and from Mary *(the medallion at the right)* the omophorion, the insignia of a bishop. The pictorial scenes framing the central image portray the following: (2) After his birth, the little Nicholas stands for two hours in his small bath in the orans posture; (3a) Nicholas rejects his mother's milk on fast days during the week; (3b) His first day at school with his uncle, an abbot; (3c) His ordination to the priesthood; (4) His consecration as bishop; (5) Nicholas appears to Emperor Constantine in a dream and admonishes him to orthodoxy at the Council of Nicaea in 325; (6) Nicholas prevents the execution of three innocent people; (7) Nicholas is saved from tragedy at sea; (8) Nicholas consoles three men in prison; (9) Nicholas saves three poor girls from prostitution by throwing money for their wedding into their chambers; (10) Nicholas exorcises a demon of trees and wells; (11) Nicholas exorcises a demon from an Assyrian boy; (12a) Nicholas saves a drowning person; (12b) Nicholas returns a boy who had been kidnapped by Saracens to his parents; (12c) The death of Saint Nicholas; (13) The burial of Saint Nicholas.

Page 205, left: Saint Nicholas protects a Ship, Greek, 1717.

Page 205, right: Saint Nicholas of Lipno, Alexander Petrov, 1294.
This icon comes from the Church of Saint Nicholas in Lipno near Novgorod. The austere Byzantine style has given way to Russian taste; the facial expressions are softer, the forehead is less furrowed, and his gaze is no longer directed intensely at the beholder.

Whenever hopes, expectations, and fulfillment are united in one person, we speak of a "synthesized personality." In the communion of saints, Nicholas (in Greek *Nikolaos*, in Russian *Nikolai* or *Nikola*; or, blending Nikola and Michael, *Mikola*) was such a personality. The number of places under Nicholas' patronage rivals that of Mary, the Mother of God. "Nicholas groans under the burden of the numerous real or imagined cares he has taken on" (P. Florensky). Nikola-Mikola is known as the "super saint"[80] or even the "second redeemer."[81] An old Russian proverb states, "Even if God should die one day, we will still have Saint Mikola." And finally, Nicholas is also the ideal bishop, whose spirituality convinces (in Greek *nikao* means "to conquer" or "convince") the simple Church folk (in Greek, *laos*). How did this saintly figure evolve? The first Nicholas to be described was a Bishop Nicholas, who died on December 10, 564. It was also around this time that he began to be venerated at his grave in Myra. At the very core of the legends that later grew up around him is the story of how he saved three generals who had been unjustly sentenced to death. The most well-known story about Nicholas is how he saved three girls from prostitution by throwing money for their marriage into the house. This story is the root of the custom of throwing gifts into houses on Saint Nicholas Day, the sixth of December (the anniversary of his death), or putting shoes in front of the door so that Nicholas can leave gifts in them. Other miracles of this saint include saving seafarers in a storm, the exhortation of Emperor Constantine to orthodoxy, the return of a kidnapped boy to his parents, and the exorcism of a demon. Many cities were founded on Nicholas' patronage, in particular along the Baltic coast from Lübeck to Novgorod. There was always a Saint Nicholas Church in the center of these cities. The significance of this "super saint" in the Middle Ages is documented by the historical fact that rich merchants of the city of Bari in southern Italy stole the relics from Myra in a military campaign and brought them to Bari. That day, May 9, 1089, became the second feast day of Saint Nicholas in the West.

"As thou hast lived in Myra,
so hast thou shown thyself as myrrh,[82]
anointed with spiritual chrism,
O holy Nicholas, High Priest of Christ.
With thy sweet fragrance
thou dost perfume the faces of those
who in faith and love
celebrate thy most glorious memory.
For thou hast saved them from
all illness, danger, and distress, O Father,
by thy prayers to the Lord."
Sticharon from the Vespers for Saint Nicholas Day, December 6

80 In Greek *hyperhagios.*
81 In Greek *allos soter.*
82 Editor's Note: A pun in Greek here. The place name *Myra* is similar to *myron*, the holy chrism used at baptism, translated in the hymn as *myrrh*, producing sweet fragrance and perfume.

The *Vita*, or biography, of this saint is purely legendary. She, like many other highly venerated martyrs and saints, is not historically identifiable. The actual deeper significance of Paraskeva-Pyatnika consists of the fact that she became the epitome of a Christian woman martyr and of what martyrdom means as a disciple of Christ. Her legendary and sometimes fanciful "biography" tells of her being tortured, but in vain; the emperor is converted to Christianity. Paraskeva preached in public and proclaimed the Gospel to different peoples, including the Vandals who tortured her cruelly and eventually decapitated her.

"O come, all ye faithful
and let us with one voice sing the praise
of the Patient Sufferer, Paraskeva.
She is resplendent with miracles in the world,
she overcame the darkness of temptation,
she offered to the faithful
the riches of grace, to all who call:
'Rejoice, O Martyr, thou most patient one.'"

From the Hymns of July 26, the Commemoration of St. Paraskeva-Pyatnika

The Paraskeva-Pyatnika should not be confused with Paraskeve or Petka, who lived as a hermit in her birthplace not far from Constantinople. *Paraskeva* means "quiet day" and refers to Good Friday; *Pyatnik* means the fifth day of the week. In early Russia, Paraskeva-Pyatnika enjoyed tremendous veneration as the patroness of housewives in their daily work and as patroness of Friday, which was the official day of trade and court proceedings. A fifteenth-century icon from Novgorod depicts the serious face of a woman wearing a head covering, not unlike the Mother of God. In her right hand she holds a cross, and in her left, an amphora with the "fragrance of martyrdom for God." In a medallion at the left we see Saint Nicholas, and at the right Saint Vlasy, a well-known local saint of Novgorod. Often the martyr Paraskeva holds an open scroll in her left hand on which the text of the creed is written.

Page 206: Saint Paraskeva, first half of the sixteenth century.

On portrait icons, Paraskeva is often shown wearing a diadem and carrying a scroll containing the beginning of the creed, to which she remained true in martyrdom. Because there are no accurate historical details about the life of this saint, again and again legends circulated about her, some of which are shown in scenes around the border. *Top row from left to right:* The birth of Paraskeva; following the death of her parents, Paraskeva gives her inheritance to the poor and preaches the Christian faith to the people; Paraskeva is led to the hegemon (the sovereign); *Side scenes, above right:* Torture; *above left:* The appearance of the Mother of God with angels to her in prison; *middle left:* Paraskeva speaking with the hegemon; *middle right:* Continuing the conversation with the hegemon; *below right:* Torture on a tree; *below left:* Paraskeva destroys a pagan temple. *Bottom row from left to right:* Paraskeva is tortured; decapitated; the downfall of the evil hegemon; the burial of Paraskeva.

Above: Saint Paraskeva Pyatnika in Audience with the Emperor, Cretan, sixteenth century. Like the word Paraskeva ("the quiet day" before Easter, that is, Good Friday), Pyatnika ("fifth weekday") also refers to Friday, the memorial day of the passion and death of Jesus. In the *Hagiologion* of the Greek Church we read that Paraskeva lived at the time of Emperor Antoninus Pius, and that she confessed her faith unafraid before him. It is stated that although the emperor was very impressed with Paraskeva's courage and erudition, he had her decapitated anyway; later, however, he himself became a Christian.

SPECIAL FORMS AND USAGE

Icons are the constant companions of Orthodox believers from the cradle to the grave. Thanks to their ubiquitous presence in every conceivable life situation, the life of believers is not simply left to chance, but gets the structure and order of God's plan of salvation. From this "permanent partnership" with the sacred image emerges a wealth of forms of presentation and usage, a wealth which by far exceeds that of the devotional pictures of the West.

The first form of presentation discussed here is the *Vita icon* or biographical icon, an icon that recounts the life of a saint. Of course, the interesting question is how icon painters were able to depict the entire, long life of a saint, with all the dramatic heights and depths, in one picture. They also had to struggle with the laws of space and time, or in the words of an old saying, "You can't dance at two weddings at the same time."

Similar problems arise with *calendar icons* and *feast day icons*, since in this special form many persons and events had to be depicted, in this case following the rhythm of the Church year. These calendar icons are unchangeable, mirrors of eternity so to speak, and in no way can they be compared to calendars with disposable pull-off sheets. The ways in which believers used calendar icons and feast day icons shows us how everyday things become trusty companions; the prose of everyday reality takes on deeper meaning in view of the eternity which is expressed in icons. This idea of always "standing before the throne of God" takes on even greater intensity in the image of intercession or, as it is called in Greek, *deësis*. It shows the main characters in the divine plan of salvation; revealing itself differently in church and at home. And here we turn our attention to the use of icons, which are easier to understand when seen in the context of everyday life.

As the name indicates, the portable or *travel icon* accompanies the believer on trips; considering the dangers which were inherent in traveling, this old custom is understandable. The *iconostasis* is an essential element and "functional device" in Orthodox liturgy as well as in private homes. A very old and essentially icon-related use is the *cruciform reliquary*, in which image and relic form a unity. *Votive icons* are bound up with crises and happy endings, while *banner and processional images* are used in conjunction with military campaigns and with ecclesiastical and public rites. As the round image has been linked with the aesthetics of form since earliest times, *"tailored icons"* must be seen in conjunction with the birth of a baby. The *Easter egg icons* unite their enjoyment in a festive way with the deep mystery of the Resurrection of Christ.

Page 208: Iconography of the Mother of God in the order of her liturgical feasts, surrounded by feast day scenes, first half of the nineteenth century.
On this 72cm x 62cm icon, the central image is the Mother of God of the Burning Bush encircled by one hundred and sixty miniature icons, all of which depict Mary with the child Jesus. The name of the icon is written underneath each small image, although the faithful beholder will immediately recognize each type of Mother of God icon simply on the basis of the posture of Mary and the child, or how the Son of God is turned in relation to his mother. The central section is framed by oval, square, or rounded scenes from various Feast days, an embellishment which rounds off the composition. The miniature icons lead us through the liturgy of the church year from the birth of Mary to the Dormition of the Mother of God. Surprisingly, the crucifixion and Jesus' descent into hell are not pictured. Instead we see below on the right side the raising of the true cross, and, in the middle above, the risen Lord as depicted in Western Easter art.

A Vita icon depicts the life[1] of a holy person. There are three forms of Vita icons. The first form portrays the saint in the center, typically formal and facing forward, surrounded by scenes of the saint's life and death, miracles, and finally the burial on smaller segments.[2] Another form depicts the various important times in the life of a saint in a kind of visual potpourri, or synopsis, all in one picture. The third form of vita tells the story of the saint in scenes arranged one on top of the other in pictorial strips. It is, of course, a prerequisite for all three forms that the events in the saint's life are known.

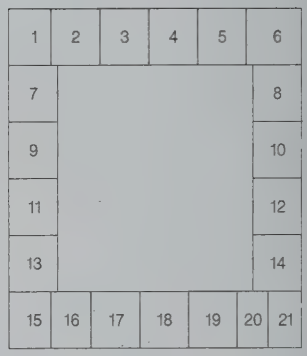
Vita icons depict the lives of the saints in chronological scenes which correspond to the events in the Church's memory of them. The pattern which has developed since the earliest days is as follows: 1. Birth, childhood, and youth with references to the future holiness of the saint (*e.g.*, standing upright as a baby being bathed, refusing to nurse on weekly fast days, or a general "peculiarity" in comparison with other children, the "separateness" characteristic of saintliness); 2. Temptations and works of the saint in the course of a life lived as it was in a uniquely "ascetic milieu;" 3. The blessed end of life; and, finally, 4. the burial.

In the portrayal of the vita of saintly monastic fathers or of saints in general from a monastic milieu, late icon painters liked to depict the saint's monastery, also as an invitation to visit.

1 In Latin, *vita.*
2 In Russian, *kleyma.*

In Vita icons, the saint was the main image in the center panel, surrounded by twelve to thirty small biographical scenes visually narrating the saint's life from birth to burial. Because exact biographical details were often not available, the painters took miraculous scenes from apocryphal writings.

Above and page 211: Saint Cyril of Beloozero with vita scenes, Russian, beginning of the sixteenth century.
Born in 1337 in Moscow, this saint founded a monastery (later named for him) in 1398 on the White Sea. He died in 1427. This icon was probably for the local level of the iconostasis of the Cathedral of the Dormition of Theotokos in the Cyril Beloozersky Monastery. Saint Cyril stands in the center panel with an open scroll. The first three scenes are shown here enlarged.
1. The clothing of Kosma (his baptismal name) in a monk's habit as Cyril; 2. Cyril in conversation with Sergei of Radonezh; 3. Consecration as Abbot *(koimesis)* in 1398; 4. Cyril retreats in 1390 to a life of silence in the old Simonovo monastery; 5. Cyril travels with a companion to the White Sea in 1387; 6. Setting up of the cross; 7. Cyril extinguishes a fire in his cell through prayer. Arrival of builders; 8. Rescue from fire; 9. Prince Belevsky asks Cyril to intercede that he might conceive children; 10. Cyril proclaims in a dream the birth of a child to the royal couple; 11. Miracle of wine; 12. Multiplication of loaves of bread; 13. Rescue from a storm at sea; 14. Cyril resuscitates a dying monk so that he can receive Communion; 15. Cyril appears to the Boyar Roman; 16. Healing of an eye disease; 17. Cyril appoints Christopher to be his successor; 18. Departure from his monks; 19. Cyril's burial; 20. Cyril appears again in a dream; 21. Healings at the grave of Cyril.



Monthly Icon for August, Russian, 18th. C.
In rows, we see the individual saints, groups of saintly persons, and scenes of sacred events, all of which are commemorated in the liturgy between August 1 and 31.

First row: 1. The Exaltation of the True Cross; the Seven Martyrs of Antioch with their mother and their teacher; 2. Stephen, the first deacon; Vasily (Basil), Fool for Christ; 3. Isaac; Anthony, Abbot of Novgorod; a holy monk; 4. The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; Severin; Eudocia; 5. Eustigneus; 6. Transfiguration of Christ; 7. Dometius.

Second Row: 8. Emilianus and three saints; 9. Apostle Matthew; 10. Lawrence; 11. Euplus; 12. Photius and Anicitus; 13. Maximus the Confessor and Maxim, the Fool for Christ of Moscow; 14. Prophet Micah; 15. Dormition of the Mother of God.

Third Row: 16. Translation of the icon of the Savior Not Made by Hands from Odessa to Constantinople; Diomedes of Tarsus; Joachim; 17. Myron of Kyzikos; 18. Florus and Laurus; 19. Lidris; Simon; Andrew Stratelates; 20. Prophet Samuel; 21. Jude; Vassa; a saint; 22. Agaphonicus; 23. Luppus; Irenaeus of Lyon; a saint; 24. two saints.

Fourth Row: 25. Translation of the relics of Metropolitan Peter of Moscow (1475); 26. Adrian and Natalia; Memorial Feast of the Translation of the Vladimir Mother of God icon from Vladimir to Moscow (1395); 27. Pimen, Abbot; 28. Moses the Ethiopian; 29. Beheading of Saint John the Forerunner; 30. Alexander, John and Paul, Archbishops of Constantinople; Alexander Svirsky (d. 1535); Alexander Nevsky (d. 1263); 31. Translation of the relic of the sash of the Mother of God.

Detail *(above):* Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, August 15

Page 213: Monthly Icon for July, Russian, around 1800.
In July there are memorial days of the Ecumenical Councils of the early Church: July 17 for the Council of Nicaea (325); July 18 for the Councils of Constantinople I (381), II (553), and III (680); Ephesus (431); and Chalcedon (451).

The icon is not only merely sacred art, it is art with a purpose. That means that the icon painters had to take into account the desires and wishes of the believers. One of those desires was to collect icons of the church year visibly displayed in the "beautiful corner" of the house. Thus calendar icons came into being in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Trying to present the Feasts of the Church Year and saints in a small space meant that the painter had to master painting in the smallest space possible, i.e. miniature fine art. There were icons for the whole Church Year beginning on September 1, as well as for every month. Seven-part icons were also very popular, not only to depict Holy Week and the Passion of Christ, but also because the number seven in itself symbolizes cosmic perfection. Icons for the whole year generally consist of three circles. In the middle, in the innermost circle, we see the Passion of Christ and his Resurrection. Grouped variously in a second circle surrounding the center are the saints of the year. The minutely detailed work in faces and clothing can be seen with a magnifying glass. In the outermost circle are the unaccompanied images of Mary and some Marian Feast days. Palekh, Cholui and Mstera were craft villages famous for the production of these calendar icons.

Above: The Twelve Great Feast Days of the Church Year, Novgorod, eighteenth century. An essential element in the iconostasis was always the Feast Day row. A cycle of twelve Feast Days of the Church Year has been standard since the twelfth century, even if the details varied. These twelve icons show the following events of salvation, celebrated in the feasts of the Lord and the Mother of God (1,3 and 11 are also shown enlarged):

1. The Annunciation of the Birth of the Messiah to the Virgin Mary
2. The Nativity of Jesus
3. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
4. The Baptism of Jesus
5. The Transfiguration of Jesus
6. The Raising of Lazarus
7. The Entry into Jerusalem
8. The Crucifixion of Jesus
9. The Descent into Hell (Anastasis)
10. The Ascension of Christ
11. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gathering of the Apostles
12. The Dormition of the Mother of God.

In the middle of the Byzantine era, as pictorial standards for icon painting and wall painting were developing, the number of the Great Feasts was also being set. The concept of Twelve Great Feasts[3] evolved without, however, becoming absolutely mandatory: The Annunciation, The Nativity of Christ, The Presentation in the Temple, The Baptism, The Transfiguration, The Raising of Lazarus, The Entrance into Jerusalem, The Crucifixion, The Descent into Hell, The Ascension, Pentecost, The Dormition of the Mother of God. The visual realization of the row of twelve or one of its variations in a painting was accomplished either with the help of "complex realization" (in which numerous single scenes were united in one picture, either simultaneously depicted or in strips of consecutive scenes) or using bordering scenes, which frequently were in several tangential rows surrounding a central scene (usually Christ's Descent into Hell). In later times and during the Baroque era, the type of depiction and the choice of Feasts was variable and the number increased from twelve to fifteen. Often one can ascertain that there was a preference for a particular "house saint."

3 In Greek, *dodekaortion.*

Left: Feast Day Icon, School of Palekh, eighteenth century.
Surrounded by smaller scenes of the Feast Days we see the Easter event in the middle depicted in consecutive scenes. In the center is the empty tomb with the angel proclaiming the resurrection of their Lord and Master to the women hurrying to the tomb with anointing oils. Like a snake, we see a large S-shape in which previous generations form a procession to Christ, who has broken open the gates of the underworld and redeems first Adam and then Eve from the dominion of death. The Holy Trinity appears in the medallion at the top. The appeal of this icon lies in the diversity of its narrative style.

Above: Feast Days and the Exaltation of the Mother of God, Tetraptych, Russian, nineteenth century.
This 17.9cm x 41.2cm bronze icon, embellished with white and blue enamel inlays, consists of four folding panels (tetraptych). The first three panels show scenes from the series of the Twelve Great Feasts. The fourth panel contains icons of the Mother of God with venerating saints (from above left to below right): 1. Mother of God of Tikhvin with Alexander Svirsky, Cyril Belozersky and four bishops; 2. Mother of God of Vladimir with the Holy Fools Maxim and Basil as well as the four saintly Metropolitans of Moscow, Peter, Jonah, Alexei, and Philip; 3. Mother of God of Smolensk with Anthony and Theodosius of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev as well as four other monastic saints; 4. Mother of God of the Sign of Novgorod with Antony Rimlyanin and Archbishop Leonty of Rostov as well as other saints. In the arched panels above are the Crucifixion of Jesus; the Trinity; the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; and the Exaltation of the Mother of God.

Left: Travel-icon as a Triptych, Russian, eighteenth century.
The 7.5cm x 20cm triptych consists of three small wooden icons embedded in metal frames. *Center:* The Dormition of the Mother of God; *left:* Presentation in the Temple; *right:* The Nativity of Christ.

Portable travel icons arose out of the need of the faithful to have the consolation of the holy image with them during trips, which in earlier times—and often even today—presented danger for body and soul. There is evidence in the icons preserved at Mount Sinai that travel icons existed in the sixth and seventh centuries, but they surely existed even earlier. These travel icons were panel-style icons as well as iconography done in ivory and later in metal, and were made as diptychs,[4] triptychs[5] and polyptychs or multiple-folded panels.

When we explore the travel literature or "itineraries"[6] of those days, the genre of travel icon becomes more understandable. The mobility of people during antiquity, late antiquity, and the Middle Ages was much greater than people of modern times generally imagine. Nearly every class of society had its travelers. As far back as the Early Church, there were devout people making pilgrimages to the sacred sites of Palestine who left detailed descriptions of their travels. These travelers joined soldiers and traders, diplomats, officers, members of the church hierarchy, students, merchants, teachers and craftsmen who, for whatever reason, were underway on foot or on horseback, in sedan chairs, on the backs of mules or camels, or traveling by ship. Then as now, farmers were the only people who hardly ever traveled. Due to their ease of handling, travel icons could be set up anywhere and at any time, creating a sacred place for prayer.

4 Diptych in Greek means "twice folded." Diptychs were the notepads of antiquity and were made of two hinged tablets which were covered with a coat of wax on the inside so that they could be written upon with a stylus.

5 "thrice folded."

6 Latin, *itinerarium*, a travel route, or the description of a trip.

Above left: Mother of God with Saints, triptych, Greek, about 1700. In the center, we see the Mother of God with the child Jesus. Saints Nicholas and George are depicted on the left wing, and Saints Antipas and Demetrius on the right.

Above right: Nativity of Christ with Saints, triptych, Greek, seventeenth century.
In the center, Mary and Joseph kneel before the manger facing each other. In the rocky landscape above them we see the proclamation to the shepherds as well as the three approaching Magi. At the very top, the angels of heaven sing *Gloria in excelsis deo.* Saints Peter and George are depicted in the panels to the right, and depicted to the left are John Chrysostom, Cosmas and Damian, and two other saints.

Left: The Twelve Great Feasts of the Church Year, ivory diptych, Byzantine, end of the tenth century.
The themes of the Feast Day icon are (from left to right): The Annunciation to Mary; The Visitation of Mary with Elizabeth; The Nativity of Jesus; The Presentation in the Temple; The Baptism of Jesus; The Transfiguration; The Entrance into Jerusalem; The Crucifixion; The Anastasis (Descent into Hell); The Appearance of the Risen Lord to the Apostles; The Ascension of Christ; The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Monday after Pentecost).

Page 219: Iconostasis. Russian. 17th C. The central vertical axis on this fully illustrated, five-tiered iconostasis is quite conspicuously accentuated. From the Royal Doors with the four Evangelists at the bottom and the Annunciation to Mary above them, we see in the middle of each row images of equal width which emphasizes their central importance. In the festal icons row, we see the Anastasis; above it on the deesis row, Christ Pantocrator. The prophets on the fourth tier are all approaching the Mother of God in the next row up, we see the New Testament Trinity (also called the Fatherhood) as the central figure of the forefathers. Of the five decorative arches at the top, the central one portrays the enthronement and is the highest of the five; the importance of the middle axis is therefore emphasized. We see also an enlargement from the Festal tier (from right to left: Christ's Descent into Hell (Anastasis), the Baptism of Christ, and the Entrance into Jerusalem (detail below).

The iconostasis needs to be seen as a liturgical structure, which simultaneously separates the nave of a church from the sanctuary and connects them with the help of three openings (doors); it plays an essential role in Orthodox worship. The concept of a pictorial wall stems from the idea of a holy, consecrated, *i.e.*, "separated" space, which was already present in pre-Christian sacred architecture—and not only in sacred architecture. In antique Roman basilicas, whether market basilicas, court basilicas, or military basilicas, the leader of the assembly and his official assistants had control over the entire room's proceedings from an elevated place in the apse. In the same manner, the bishops and priests presided over worship from the apse in Christian basilicas with the congregational processions in the nave. It was not only the ordained status of the priests, but above all the consecrated altar as the sacred place of Christ's unbloody sacrifice which separated the apse with its consecrated persons from the unconsecrated "people," the "laity."[7] This principle of interior, spatial design has remained intact up to this day in the West for the important reason that the laity should be able to follow unhindered the proceedings in the sanctuary, and attest to the proceedings' canonical and liturgical validity. In this way, the danger of having heretical priests celebrate the Mass could be avoided.

The Eastern Church, originating from the same basic concepts, sought and found other solutions for defining a holy, "separated" sanctuary. Let it be said at the outset that the solutions of the Eastern Church differ from the more sober and matter-of-fact solutions of the Roman Church. *Religio* in the Roman mindset has always meant the distinct, cogent, even legally binding juridical relationships between God and humans, which in the West have also been applied to the interiors of the churches.

Even within the time span of the composition of the New Testament the simple "breaking of the bread" of the post-Pentecost church,[8] following the institution of the Eucharist and the memorial commission of Jesus,[9] developed into the Pauline commemorative Lord's Supper.[10] Just a few decades after the institution of the eucharistic celebration of the meal and the sacrifice of Jesus this clearly structured spiritual center of the congregation had evolved. Finally the unique and varied structure we call liturgy grew out of this center. These rites, processions, lessons, hymns, and even the liturgical garments shimmering in the candlelight demanded an appropriate liturgical space. And in this liturgical space there needed to be a "separated" special space, in which the mystery of the Last Supper could be celebrated. This separate space was the same as that which had already developed in the Western Roman basilicas and became for the Church that space which closed off the eastern end of the church.

Far away from Rome in the Christian East, more precisely in the sphere of Syro-Palestinian culture, notions emerged which we may consider to be the first stage in the development that led to the later iconostasis. In place of a long explanation we will let a text from those early days of the fourth century elucidate how Eastern Christians understood the Eucharist, or rather how they experienced it: "Fear and trembling take hold of the priest in that horrendous hour, for himself as well as for the people. In his fearful role and in his priestly office, an object of awe even for the seraphim, he stands in trepidation, the son of dust as the mediator. The formidable King, mystically slaughtered and buried, and the horrified spectators in fear for their Lord."

This is the tone of religious agitation, which we in the West associate with the High Middle Ages, the time of gothic architecture. The altar is understood in these Eastern sources as the "Table of holy trembling", as "divine Table awakening dread" and the whole eucharistic celebration as a

7 From the Greek, *antimension*, meaning "the pendant."
8 Acts 2:42.
9 Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20.
10 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

...	...	Job	...	Abraham
The Prophet Zachariah	The Prophet Jonah	The Prophet Hosea	The Prophet Micah	The Prophet Nah
The Nativity of Mary	The Entry of Mary into the Temple	The Annunciation to Mary	The Nativity of Jesus	The Presentation Lord in the Temp
Saint Stephen the Martyr	Zosima the Monk	John Chrysostom	Basil the Great	Peter the Apostle

Melchizedek Adam

The Fatherhood

Jacob

e Prophet Moses Zachariah (Father of John the Baptist)

King David The Mother of God with the Immanuel King Solomon

The Prophet Elijah

The Transfiguration of Christ

e Baptism of Jesus The Entry into Jerusalem

The Crucifixion The Descent into Hell

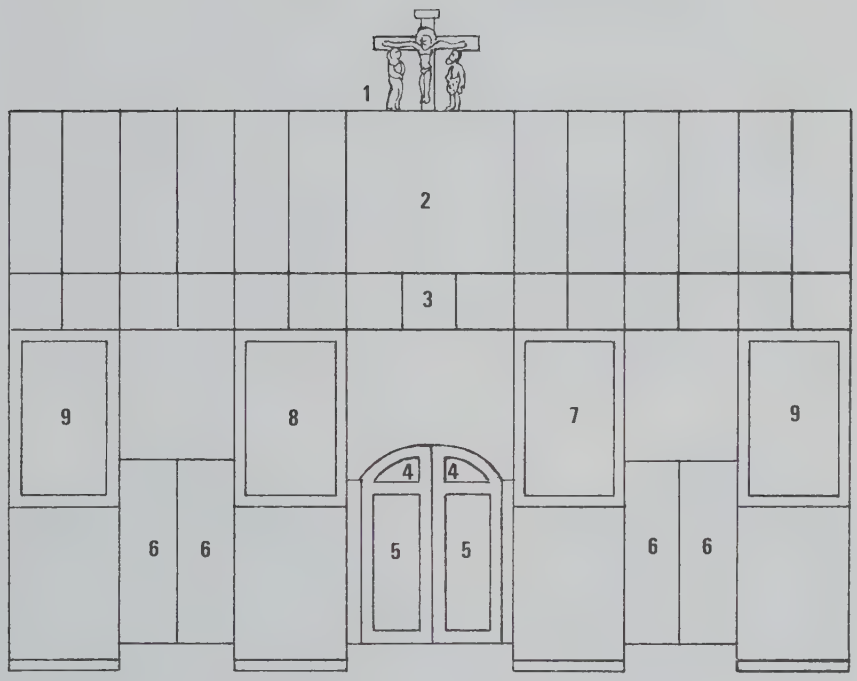
John the Forerunner

Archangel Gabriel The Mother of God

Christ Pantocrator

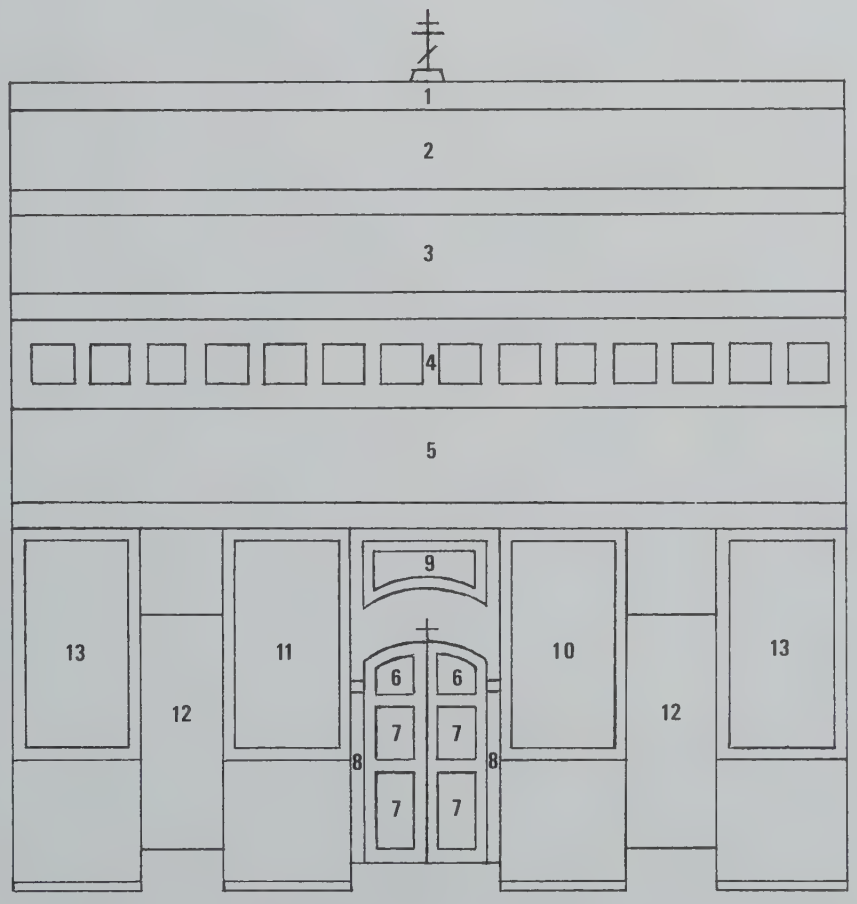
Joseph	Noah	...	...	Enoch
The Prophet Ezekiel	The Prophet Elisha	The Prophet Isaiah	The Prophet Zephaniah	The Prophet Daniel
The Hospitality of Abraham	The Dormition of the Mother of God	The Elevation of the Cross	The Protecting Veil of Mary	The Raising of Lazarus
				Saint Thecla
The Apostle Paul	Saint Nicholas	Saint Gregory	Saint Savaty	

The Structure of the Greek Iconostasis
1. The Crucifix with Mary and John
2. The Deësis in the center with archangels and saints
3. Removable or permanent feast day icons
4. The Annunciation to Mary
5. The four Evangelists or four Church Fathers
6. An angel or deacon
7. An icon of Christ
8. An icon of the Mother of God
9. Local saints



The Structure of the Greek Iconostasis

The Structure of the Russian Iconostasis
A complete Russian iconostasis has at least five rows, one on top of the other.
1. A simple cross.
2. The patriarchs of the Old Testament: Adam, David, Solomon, Moses, and others. In the center, the Trinity as the initiator of the covenant between God and humanity.
3. The prophets of the Old Testament. In the center, the Mother of God of the Sign, to her left usually David, to the right Solomon.
4. A row of the Feast Day images: the Nativity of Mary, the Entrance of Mary into the Temple, the Nativity of Jesus, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the Annunciation to Mary, the Entrance into Jerusalem, Easter (the Descent into Hell), the Ascension of Christ, Pentecost, the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, the Dormition of the Mother of God, and frequently even more Feast Day images.
5. The Intercessory Assembly of the Church: in the center the deësis; to the left and right the archangels Michael and Gabriel; the apostles Peter and Paul; the holy Church Doctors, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom; the Great Martyrs, George and Demetrius; sometimes local saints or founders of monasteries.
6. The Annunciation to Mary.
7. The four Evangelists or Church Fathers.
8. Church Fathers and/or important members of the hierarchy.
9. Communion of the Apostles (in which Christ is shown twice: giving the bread to six Apostles on one side and then giving the wine to the other six on the other side).
10. Christ Pantocrator, or the titular icon of the parish with the patron saint or feast day, to whom or which the church has been consecrated.
11. The Mother of God with Child.
12. Angels and/or deacons
13. Local saints.



The Structure of the Russian Iconostasis

Pages 220, 221, 222: An Iconostasis for Travel and Home, Russian, seventeenth century.
The original of this iconostasis is 152cm x 46.5cm. In the lower, deësis, row, Christ is enthroned in majesty in a threefold aureole, surrounded by Mary to the left and John the Forerunner to the right, who are followed by angels, princes of the Church, apostles, and saints in intercessory posture. The rank above this level depicts sixteen feast days: the Nativity of Mary, the Entrance of Mary into the Temple, the Annunciation to Mary, the Nativity of Jesus, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the Baptism of Jesus, the Entrance into Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, the Descent into Hell, the Transfiguration, the Ascension of Christ, the Trinity, the Dormition of the Mother of God, the Elevation of the Holy Cross, the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God, and the Raising of Lazarus. The Mother of God of the Sign is in the center of the third row from the bottom, between David to the left and Solomon to the right. On both sides, in half-figure format, are prophets of the Old Testament with scrolls. The next rank shows God the Father with the pre-existent Son in his lap, with the forefathers of the Old Covenant on the right and the left.

Page 225: Iconostasis in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Moscow, 1489.
This illustration suggests that everyone who has made their way through the dark cathedral and approaches this shimmering gold iconostasis will be moved by the mysterious rays emanating from these icons. This is one of the oldest extant Russian iconostases. It has five tiers, but with a different combination of images. At the very top, the Mother of God sits enthroned in the center; at the sides, the prophets who predicted the coming of the Savior approach her. Underneath this tier is the row of feast day images. The next and most important rank is the deësis with Christ Pantocrator in the center, surrounded by Mary and John the Forerunner, followed by angels and saints (no longer visible in this illustration). They are all depicted full-length, drawing the eye of the beholder to this celestial area where the Almighty is surrounded by intercessors for humanity. Under the deësis rank, there is a row of smaller icons with calendar saints and biblical scenes. Alongside the gilded royal doors, there are large icons of the Mother of God and Christ and, at the far right, the scene of the Annunciation to Mary, under whose patronage this cathedral was consecrated.

mysterium tremendum , as a mystery of fear and trembling. This religious atmosphere, this particular religious sensitivity led to the architectural embellishment of the balustrade separating the sanctuary from the nave and which came to be called the rood screen with columns between which costly banners were hung (Latin *velum*). The rood screen—in liturgical history—was the origin and predecessor of the iconostasis, while at the same time the religious reticence of the faithful with regard to the events behind this screen provided its actual subjective roots.

The very structure of the rood screens in various ways cried out for their further development. For instance the beam which was laid across the tops of the columns, the "architrave," was an open invitation to put paintings, icons, on it. At first the selection and the sequence of images was probably left to the whim and fancy of the faithful, but there soon developed a grouping order for the Great Deësis on the architrave. Another further development consisted of decorating the beam with medallions on which Christ, the Mother of God, angels and saints were portrayed, as we know from a report about such a structure (later called *templon*) in the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Finally at the point when icons were also placed in the empty spaces between the columns ("intercolumniation") the iconostasis was born (Greek *eikonostasis*, fem.; Russian *ikonostas*, masc.).

An iconostasis has three doors: the middle door to the altar, the left door (as seen from the nave) to the preparatory altar and the right door to the Deacon's room with the liturgical apparatus and vestments. These doors are necessary for processions during the liturgy (Greek *leiturgia—service to God*). The central door to the altar, through which the liturgist takes the sacred gifts which were prepared on the preparatory altar, is also called "the Royal Door" or in Greece "Gate of Mercy." In all of the Orthodox ethnic groupings the iconostasis is divided into parallel levels or "floors", which are called "ranks."[11] In the Greek-Byzantine tradition the iconostasis is structured as follows: 1st rank: the Great Deësis in a larger format; 2nd rank: Feast Day icons in small format from the Annunciation to the Dormition of Mary; 3rd rank: the Gate of Mercy. It is flanked by Christ and the Mother of God; the "gate" itself displays at the top the Annunciation to the Mother of God, underneath that the four evangelists on the surfaces of the door, not infrequently also the two chief liturgists of the eastern Church, Basil and John Chrysostom. Crowning the entire structure there is a cross, as early as in the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, which during the Baroque period, perhaps influenced by the Gothic, was exchanged for a statue of the crucifixion with Mary and John.

The Russian ikonostas can be differentiated from the Greek icōnostasis by its more emphatic horizontal and vertical structure which at the same time allows for a stricter concentration on the theological content. The high arching iconostasis, consisting of a wooden or stone scaffolding, is intimately linked to the activities of the great masters Andrei Rublev and Feofan Grek (see page 84). It has the following structure: 1st and upper rank: the Trinity as the origin of the events of salvation, flanked by the forefathers of Christ; 2nd rank: the Mother of God of the Sign as the epitome of the incarnation of Christ in the sense of an "execution" of the events of salvation through the Trinity, flanked by prophets of the Old Covenant gesturing to Christ; 3rd rank: Feast Day icons in smaller format; 4th rank: the Great Deësis. The bottommost level with the three doors has the same pictorial program as its Greek-Byzantine predecessors. The iconostasis, as a "liturgical building" in its unity of adoration, intercession and sacramental re-presentation of the events of salvation, and in the visualization of holy persons, constitutes a compendium of Eastern Church theology. The Russian ikonostas since its inception has been conceived and executed with greater theological differentiation than its older sister.

11 Russian, *chin.*

Above: Cruciform Reliquary Triptych, Russian, eighteenth century.
A piece of the cross of Christ lies underneath the bronze cross in the center of this triptych. Above the two groups of three people with Mary and John, we see to the left the Descent from the Cross and to the right the Entombment. The whole ensemble is crowned with the Old Testament Trinity.

Page 227: Cruciform Reliquary, view of the inside, Byzantine, 964–65.
The reliquary has been embellished with precious decorations of colorful cloisonné enamel. The relic of the cross is in the undecorated double cross; other relics have been placed in the square corners. The crusader Heinrich of Ülmen took the reliquary back to Germany and gave it to an Augustinian convent on the Mosel River, where it remained until 1789. After the secularization of monasteries and the establishment of the new diocese of Limburg in 1827, the reliquary was added to the cathedral treasures at Limburg.

As the Greek designation *stavrothek* suggests, this work of art is a "cross case," or, more precisely, a reliquary containing pieces of the cross. Such cruciform reliquaries were made from costly wood or metals. Scenes from the life, death, and resurrection of Christ along with angels and saints were depicted on these reliquaries. There were reliquaries in the form of small cases and in the form of the cross. Probably the most well-known example is the "Reliquary of Limburg," which was stolen by crusaders in 1204 from the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and is on display today in Limburg. The prototype of this form of sacred art cultivated by all Orthodox peoples was "the silver box in which the wood of the holy cross is kept," that is, the reliquary of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. Numerous pilgrims have traveled to Jerusalem from the fourth century up to the present day to participate in the veneration of this relic.

"Come ye, all peoples, and let us venerate the blessed Wood, through which the eternal justice has been brought to pass. For he who by a tree deceived our forefather Adam, is by the Cross himself deceived; and he who by tyranny gained possession of the creature endowed by God with royal dignity, is overthrown in headlong fall. By the blood of God the poison of the serpent is washed away; for it was fitting that wood should be healed by wood, and that through the Passion of One who knew not passion should be remitted all the sufferings of him who was condemned because of wood."
Sticharon at the Vespers of the Feast of the Holy Cross on September 14

Above: The Deësis, decorative strip divided by columns, 37.5cm x 97.5cm, Greek, seventeenth century.

Above: The Evangelist Mark at His Writing Table, with his symbol, the winged lion, round panel, 15cm diameter, Russian, around 1800.

Below: The Deësis, expanded by eight angels and saints, with God the Father above the clouds in the medallion at the top; Russian, nineteenth century.

DEËSIS

The Greek word *deësis*[12] means "intercession," "prayer," or "adoration," and, in the iconography of the Eastern Church, it designates a three-figured icon: Christ as Judge of the World, sitting on a throne with either an open or closed bible, flanked on his right by the Mother of God and on his left by John the Forerunner (the Baptist), both in an intercessory posture. This form is referred to as the Small Deësis; if more intercessors are depicted, then it is called the Great Deësis. Additional figures are often the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, the Apostles Peter and Paul, and the liturgical experts of the Eastern Church, Basil and John Chrysostom. Often local iconostases also depict canonized local saints of episcopal rank. With the exception of Christ, all of the figures are portrayed slightly bowed in intercessory posture, seldom standing upright. Their concave silhouettes convey an overall atmosphere of solemnity. The deësis became an essential detail of the iconostasis. It depicts intercession for all people, one of the basic tenets of the Church of Christ.

12 In Russian, *deisus*, with the "us" ending corresponding to Jesus.

Above: Christ as the Prince of Peace with a Wreath of Rays, processional icon of fire-gilded metal, Russian, seventeenth century.

PROCESSIONAL ICONS

Carried by influential members of the congregation on long poles, processional icons were intended, as the name indicates, to lead the processional on certain feast days. They are like standard icons except that they do not have an image on the back side. The most well-known is the icon of The Baptism of Christ, which leads the procession on the sixth of January, the day of the Great Blessing of Water.

Above: The Mother of God of the Sign as an Orant Surrounded by Seraphim, round panel, 54cm in diameter, Russian, seventeenth century.

ROUND IMAGE (MEDALLION, CLIPEUS)

Its form alone explains the intention of this type quite clearly. It "includes" one person, thereby "excluding" others. The word *medallion* is French, from the Italian term for a coin used either as money or for commemorations.[13] Clipeus, Latin for a round shield, refers to the lifting up of a person (for example, the custom of Roman and Byzantine soldiers of lifting up their emperors on their shields). The rounded image, in Latin an *imago clipeata*, belongs to the treasury of artistic symbolism in Hellenistic art, and its artistic intention was to "lift up" important persons, especially emperors, generals, and philosophers. Similarly, Christ, the apostles, or other saints were often depicted on a clipeus, which thus fulfilled a purpose similar to the aureole. The Mother of God with Child is also portrayed on a clipeus, particularly the type of Mother of God called Platytera, where the child is recognizable as the Immanuel.

Above: The Mandylion, with the motto "God is with us" above, battlefield icon standard, Russian, nineteenth century.

STANDARDS

Standards, from the Latin *extendere*, "unfold" or "spread out," were used on the battlefield as orientation aids to the troops, and, for that reason, are also referred to as ensigns. All Orthodox peoples have recorded stories about icons (images on panels and costly embroideries) being carried into battle. The preferred images were of Christ (primarily the Christ Not Made by Hands) and Mary. The image of the Mother of God with the Immanuel on a clipeus is called Mother of God of the Sign,[14] referring both to Isaiah 7:14 and to the use of the icon as a standard on the battlefield. Old icons from Novgorod show the Mother of God of the Sign being carried around the city walls[15] and finally leading the army in battle, where the enemy shoots arrows at it. This visual narration explains the basic purpose of this type of icon: calling up the presence of the Mother of God, who in difficult situations proves to be the protective patroness to those under her care. Standard icons were usually double-sided; the front was meant to repel the enemy, and the back was meant to strengthen the troops.

13 The Italian word itself comes from the Latin word *metallum*, "metal."

14 In Russian, *znamenie*, "a sign."

15 Thus another epithet for this icon, The Little Mother of the City Walls.

VOTIVE ICONS
EASTER EGGS
"TAILORED" ICONS

Left: Painted Easter Egg, Crete
The Orthodox faithful exchange red-colored eggs or eggs painted with holy images at Easter as a symbol of the resurrection of Christ. In earlier times, the ruling sovereigns would give such small works of art to important persons as gifts.

Left: Votive Image in the Church of the Madonna del Monte, Cesena, beginning of the sixteenth century.
The kneeling woman thanks the Mother of God for her help, who appears in an aureole between Saint Francis and Saint Peter the Martyr.

Above: Votive Panel in the Santuario della Madonna del Monte, Cesena, around 1450 to 1460.
The child Jesus stretches his arm in blessing over a man kneeling in front of him. The Italian subtext reads: "I, John, son of Sr. Francesco Marescualco, fell seriously ill and, through the intercession of the Madonna, I became well again very quickly."

Page 231: Votive Image, Greek, oil on wood, This 340cm x 270cm painting was commissioned as a thank offering for rescue from a storm at sea. Above a band of clouds, we see the Mother of God with Child in half-figure between two saints, with a gold background. One of the saints is Nicholas, venerated as the protector of seafarers. On the lower half, we see the person who commissioned the painting, kneeling in thankful prayer on the shore of the stormy sea after having been rescued.

Votive icons play an important role in the life of the Orthodox faithful even if they are often categorized as "devotional items," that is, art in which the personal, religious value is independent of aesthetic quality. The top of this type of icon portrays the saint whose intercession brought help to someone in the situation displayed at the bottom.

Closely related to this type of icon are also those that have come to be called "tailored" icons in Russia. The quality of wood on which they were painted was dependent on the economic situation of the parents. The icon was tailored to the size of a newborn baby and then used to depict the patron saint of the baby.

Easter egg icons depicting the Descent of Christ into Hell are very popular, and exchanged at divine worship on Easter morning along with the Easter Kiss during the acclamation, "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"

Only a selection of the most important special forms and uses of icon painting are presented here. Each Orthodox ethnic group has developed its own variety of expression. It is precisely these forms, however, that give us an impression of the everyday life of believers, for whom icons play an essential role. Perhaps it is because they belong to a "minor" art form that they have their own history in the devotional life of the people.

These last forms and uses of icons should not be considered of secondary or even peripheral importance. For an adequate impression of Orthodox spirituality and how it is manifested in the use of icons, we must take the sometimes bumpy road from the heights of theological and philosophical speculation all the way down to the bright Easter egg icons.

PAINTING TECHNIQUES AND ARTISTIC MATERIAL

At the beginning of the ninth century, an enthusiastic iconophile said, "I adore the material through which my salvation has come." As exaggerated and perhaps easily misunderstood as this formulation is, it serves as a good opening sentence for this chapter on the techniques and materials of icon painting. How does an icon come to be? What are the various stages of its creation?

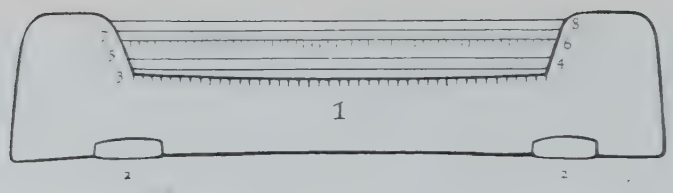
We will consider first of all wood icons. The kind of wood used depended upon the financial situation of the person commissioning the icon. In Russia, limewood was the preferred material. Some icons were also painted on pine and spruce, while oak, cypress and plane-tree wood were decidedly more expensive. Generally speaking, we can assume that the person commissioning the icon was responsible for procuring the wood. In Byzantium, widely traveled merchants whose commercial connections reached far into the Orient provided the materials, since the great demand for icons made it a profitable enterprise. Carpenters in the icon workshops planed the wooden slabs, glued them together, and added braces and other clamps to the backs of the boards. This bracing was particularly necessary for large icons. It was not until later that braces were discontinued (their presence or absence becoming then a primary method for the dating of icons). Finally, the carpenters had to hollow out a recess on the front side of the wooden panel in order to produce the space necessary for the work of the painter. In Russian, this recess is called a *kovcheg*, a word that actually means "a small reliquary." This emphasized the perceived similarity between icons and relics. The border surrounding the recess should not be construed as a frame, because, together with the recess, it forms a unity that is the entire icon. Sacred personages were portrayed on these borders. Frequently, the border is as wide as the surface of the recess in the center, allowing ample room for paintings of saints.

The surface of the kovcheg was roughened to give the following layers a hold. First, a layer of glue[1] was placed on the surface. Glue was produced in Byzantine Greece and elsewhere from animal hides, but in Russia the use of fish glue, particularly expensive sturgeon glue, was prevalent, because it was considered more "natural." A considerable amount of time went into the preparation of the fish glue, and its odor certainly did not enhance the atmosphere in the painters' workshops either. Then, a layer of cloth called a *pavoloka* was placed over the layer of glue. All sorts of materials were used for a pavoloka, from women's scarves to expensive linens; the cloth layer on an icon by Andrei Rublev was taken from a patterned table cloth, for instance.

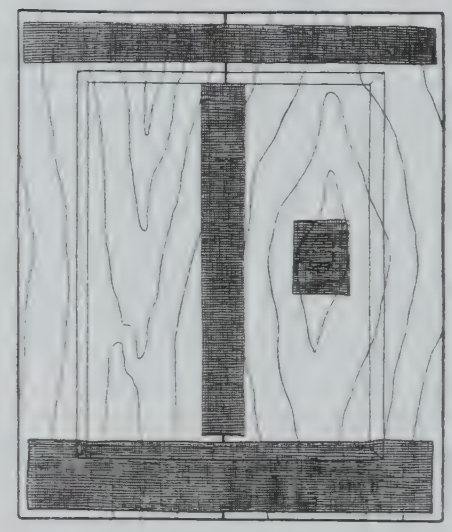
The paint foundation, or gesso, called *grunt* or *levkas* in Russian, was then applied to the cloth layer. (The word *levkas* comes from *leuka*, "white" in Greek, because gesso consists of alabaster and chalk.) When heating these materials, honey or linseed oil was also added to keep the grunt smooth and to prevent premature cracking. Preparation of the levkas was a task of great responsibility, since its quality determined the durability of the layers to follow and was also a prerequisite for achieving the desired effect of light in the finished icon, a "gentle" transparency. In order to achieve this smooth surface, the levkas was smoothened with horsetail, pumice, or, in more recent times, sandpaper.

Page 232: The Evangelist Luke, Yaroslavl, Simeon Spiridonov, around 1690.
This icon of the Evangelist Luke, with his symbol, a winged ox in the clouds, may be one of a set of doors. St. Luke, quill in hand, sits at his writing table illuminated by a candle. The partially fantastic, partially realistic architectural façade, which builds an interior space for St. Luke, is one of the favorite stylistic elements of the artist Spiridonov. Luke the Evangelist, bent over his writing, is presented as a slender and graceful figure, whose green and red robes characterize him as a person of nobility. His societal status is also demonstrated by the dainty, small cabinet at the left, containing a water jug, a bowl, and a towel for washing hands. The painter, with an eye for detail, has included this in his portrayal.

1 Greek *kolla*, Russian *klei*.



The sketch above is the cross section of a wooden panel icon. The wooden panel (1) is as high as the frame is wide. The two small rectangles at the bottom (2) determine where the wooden wedges on the reverse side of the icon will be put to prevent the wood from warping and causing the paint to crack. Within the hollowed-out area of the panel, where the actual painting is, the first layer (3) consists of glue. On top of that (4), a piece of linen soaked



in glue is spread out (in Russian, the *pavoloka*). The pavoloka is then covered with a foundation layer of gesso (5), consisting of chalk and alabaster (called the levkas in Greek and the grunt in Russian). Then the outline is drawn and, if the icon also has gold areas, the chrysography is next (6). The actual painting itself can then begin (7). The flesh colors are applied first. Finally, a protective oil layer (called olifa in Russian) is applied (8). The second sketch shows the pavoloka (the cloth layer), which is applied to knots or natural cracks in the wood.

The next step was drawing the outline.[2] Very experienced painters and the great masters produced these outline drawings out of their own heads; others, however, needed to consult painters' manuals for guidelines. One of the most common techniques recommended in these books was the transfer of an image or its outline to the prepared surface of a new icon. There were various ways to transfer[3] a design that might be categorized as stencil or template. The Russian technical term *ptiporoch*, derived from the Russian word *proch* meaning "dust" or "powder," describes one of these procedures. A paper perforated with an outline drawing was laid on the levkas and then strewn with powder, transferring a pattern of dotted lines to the surface, which the painter could then retrace. In Greek painters' manuals, reference is made to a technique called "peeling off."[4] This involved taking a completed icon and, using paints, tracing its design onto its *olifa*, or protective layer. A moist paper was then pressed onto this retraced design, "peeling" it off, and it was then transferred to the new icon by pressing the paper onto the gesso. In later times, the Russian *grafiya* process became widely used. In this technique, the drawing was engraved into the levkas with a hot iron, thus facilitating the separation of the colored parts from the gold background. Finally, we should not forget charcoal drawings. Charcoal was produced in workshops from the finest of woods, since the lines had to be easily brushed away with a feather. Charcoal outline drawings of some of the masters, such as Feofan Grek, have remained intact.

After all this preparation, the actual work of painting could begin. The production, combining, and mixing of paints was a strictly guarded secret in the workshops, and it is only in recent times, with the help of modern analysis, that some of the secrets have been revealed. In earlier times, the wooden board was placed on a table or other support and painted; easels did not come into use until the seventeenth century. The painting itself was organized into specific task-oriented phases of work. There was the *lichnik*,[5] who painted the "incarnate," or parts of the body exposed to view; the *dolichnik*, who painted the fauna and flora; and the *posolotchik* (or gilder), who was responsible for applying gold leaf to the appropriate sections. All of these tasks required great experience and tedious manual accuracy.

Icons painted with the egg tempera technique received another protective layer over the painted layer. This last layer was meant to protect the underlying layer of color from impurities in the air such as candle soot and dust, as well as from humidity or dampness. This final layer consisted of a thin film of oil, to which "drying" oils such as poppy, hemp, nut, and olive oil were added. There were many and varied recipes for preparing this. Known as the *olifa* in Russian, this layer served to protect, and its quality guaranteed the luminescence of the icon's colors. Preparation and application of the olifa required years of experience and a steady hand. In contrast to varnish, the olifa forms a very delicate "skin" covering the whole icon. The removal of this skin for purposes of restoration requires precise knowledge of the old painting techniques, materials, and traditions, as well as an artisan's skill and great manual dexterity.

2 Greek *schedographia*, Russian *risunok*.
3 In Russian *perevod*.
4 In Greek *egalein* or *ebgalein*.
5 From the Russian for "face" or "countenance."

THE BLESSING OF THE ICON

An icon is not accepted for liturgical use in the Church until it has been consecrated. Believers also bring their house icons to priests to be hallowed. It is through the blessing of an icon that it is hallowed, set apart from other images, and recognized as holy. A covered table is placed in front of the iconostasis. One or more icons of Christ are put on the table and are then censed by a priest in liturgical vestments. Prayers follow, alluding to the fact that the icon was indeed made "in memory of thy Beloved Son and his redeeming Incarnation." While sprinkling the icon with holy water, the priest repeats three times, "This icon is sanctified by the grace of the all Holy Spirit and through the sprinkling of this holy water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The closing prayer is, "Who in his ineffable providence prior to his voluntary Passion wished to impress upon linen an image of his most holy and loving countenance, not made by hands, Christ, our true God, through the intercession of his most pure Mother and all his Saints, have mercy upon us and save us, for he is good and loves mankind."

Saint Luke as Portrayer of the Mother of God (detail), Russian, seventeenth century.
The events involved in Saint Luke's painting of Mary with the child Jesus on her arm are shown here in four scenes that have been woven into a unified picture. We see Luke, sketchbook in hand, looking up to his model, the Mother of God; then (scene below) we see him working as an angel watches; and (above right) we see him offering his completed painting to the Mother of God for her appraisal. Despite the realism, this work is a touchingly pious pictorial narration.

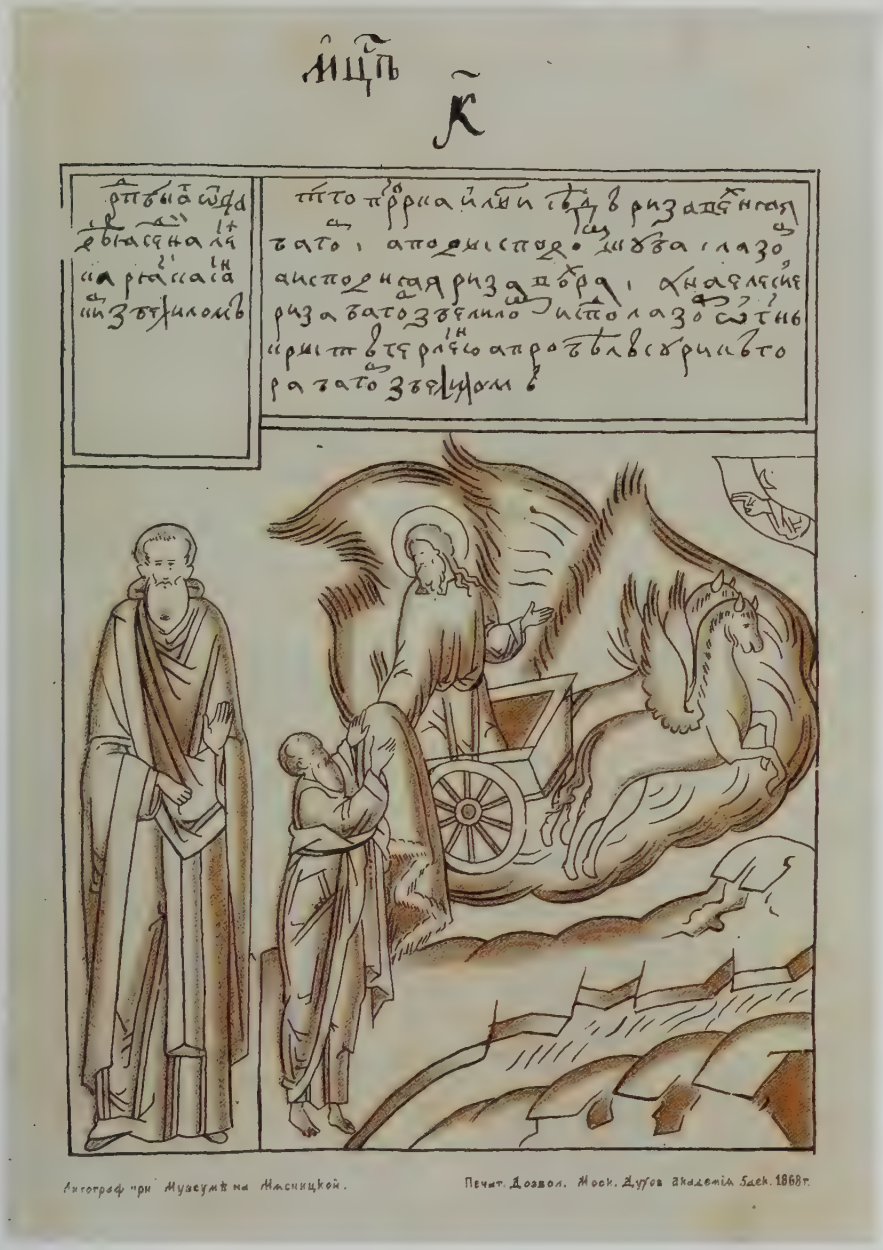
The oldest painters' manuals originated in the Byzantine and Russian domains in the sixteenth century. Individual masters and workshops produced patterns up to and including the nineteenth century, to provide icon painters with directions for the traditional depiction of saints and feast days. These patterns for drawings were particularly important for weekly, monthly, and yearly calendar icons.

Left: The Feast of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, who, according to the *Stroganov Painters' Manual,* "met a martyr's death in a lake," is celebrated on the ninth of March. These Armenian soldiers refused to renounce Christianity, and they were condemned to stand the whole night in icy water. Those who were still alive in the morning had their knees shattered, their corpses were burned, and the ashes were thrown into the sea. One of the soldiers fled into a warm bathhouse and immediately fell over dead. The pagan soldier on guard was so impressed with the Christian soldiers' loyalty to their faith that he removed his uniform and stood with them in the icy water, so that he too became worthy of the martyr's crown.

Right: The fourteenth of August is the memorial day of the Prophet Micah (left in the illustration). The following day is the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God. Mourning Apostles surround the bier. In the foreground, the legend of Jephonias is depicted as he attempts to topple the catafalque. In the background, Christ stands in an aureole with the soul of his Mother in his hands, surrounded by angels and saints.

During the Middle Ages in the Roman Catholic West, devotional images caused such conflicts between artistic freedom and the official teaching of the Church that they became occasions for episcopal intervention. In the East, however, the icon was itself an embodiment and a fulfillment of the Church's teaching. A conflict-free relationship between Church and artists was one of the basic prerequisites for book illumination, wall painting, and icon painting in the East. The synods of Orthodoxy have always upheld the episcopal supervision of artists. An important instrument of episcopal "cybernetics,"[6] or direction, was the painters' manual. These manuals contained guidelines for the three tracing techniques mentioned above and for specific composition patterns. The fact that they were mandatory for artists should not be taken too strictly, although these guidelines were more strict than Western painters' manuals. In later times, in particular, when the icon threatened to become merely a devotional object, painters' manuals helped to maintain a certain standard of quality. At the same time, an interest in past eras of Byzantine sacred art was awakened. These manuals were called *hermeneia* in Greek, explanations for the copying of proto-images. This corresponds to the Russian *podlinnik.*

The most well-known of the Greek painters' manuals is the *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos,* said to have been written by Dionysius of Fourna in 1468 in connection with the works of the painter Panselinos. We are most likely dealing with a compilation originating in the eighteenth century



Page 238: Saint John the Baptist, encaustic painting, Palestinian, end of the fifth century. The full-length 46.8cm x 25.1cm figure of John practically fills the entire surface of the painting. With shaggy hair and brown clothing, with a lambskin visible in between, he is depicted in this icon as the "voice of one calling in the wilderness." On the scroll in his left hand is written: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." With his right hand, he points to the medallion of Christ.

Left: In the July menologion, Saint Dio is depicted on the nineteenth and the Prophet Elijah on the twentieth, the latter ascending to heaven in a fiery chariot, casting his cloak to his disciple Elisha.

Above: On the sixteenth of August, the physician Saint Diomedes (at the left) is celebrated; without remuneration, he healed and converted many patients to Christianity. Under the Emperor Diocletian, he was condemned to be executed in Nicomedia. He died on the way there. The soldiers who beheaded him subsequently went blind, and only when they placed the head of the saint beside his body could they see again.

on the basis of a sixteenth-century manuscript.

The *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos* is in four parts; the first part deals with painting techniques, including the art of transfers; the second and third with iconographic themes; and the fourth with the decoration of churches.

The oldest handwritten Russian painters' manual came about in connection with the Synod of the Hundred Chapters in 1552 and its efforts to reform sacred art. The *Uvarov and Antoniev-Sisky Painters' Manual* comes from the far north of Russia. The *Stroganov Podlinnik* (cf. p. 93) is connected with the Stroganovs, a distinguished merchant family. The Old Ritualists, or Old Believers, who had separated from the patriarchal Church, founded a center for traditional icon painting at Palekh (cf. p. 99) and created painters' manuals of their own—Dolotov from Palekh is known as the compiler of a manual in the seventeenth century. Russian painters' manuals can be divided into two categories. First is the *likvoi podlinnik*, which superbly show the outline drawings of holy personages, separately and in groups or scenes, following the order for the Orthodox church year; and second, the *tolkovy podlinnik*, commentaries on painters' manuals with short explanations, some illustrated and some not.

6 In Greek *kybernesis*, "helmsman" or "leadership ability."

The Greek words *enkaio*, *enkausis*, and *enkauma* describe a painting technique in which paints are combined with heated wax and "burnt into" (Greek *enkaiein*) the material used. The Byzantines described this technique as wax color painting.[7] Ivory, wood of all sorts, alabaster, limestone, marble, parchment, leather, glass, and canvas could be used with this technique. The paints combined with the wax were placed directly on the surface. Beeswax has a melting temperature of 63°–65°C, and solidifies as soon as it is applied to the material. By necessity, artists had to work very quickly. To this end the artist used a kind of stylus in addition to a charcoal brazier.[8] With the aid of this stylus, the pattern was engraved into the material and the heated wax paints were applied. Greek artists, however, were not satisfied with the results of this technique, so to achieve better results they invented a new tool, a burning iron.[9] It was an iron rod[10] with a small spoon on one end and a pointed spatula on the other. This twofold instrument was heated in the brazier, and then used to apply, distribute, and work the heated wax paints. This method produced a beautifully luminescent, opaque application of color requiring no protective coating because of the durability of wax, and because wax is more resistant to air than tempera. This pastose painting technique made possible extraordinarily vivid and realistic portraits—portraits of a "naturalism" that is also the special quality of earlier encaustic icons.

7 *Ketochytos graphe* or *kerographia*, commonly called *hylographia*, "painting with a specific material."

8 In Greek *kestron*, in Latin *cestrum*.

9 In Greek *kauterion*.

10 In Greek *rhabbdion*, meaning "a small rod;" its Latin equivalent was called a *cauterium*.

The Latin word *temperare* means "to mix, to keep at a fixed temperature," and its importance in antiquity was quite interdisciplinary. Doctors and artists alike had common knowledge of the pharmaceuticals and chemicals that were also used as paints (pigments). It is said of the monastic painter Alimpy that he also used his artistic paints to heal the sick. The conceptual unity of paints and pharmaceuticals in the East and the West was part of the medieval *Weltanschauung*, with traditions reaching back far into antiquity. Let us now turn our attention to the most important colors and pigments.

Ochre,[11] one of the most widely used colors in a variety of tones, was obtained from soils and deposits. Ochres were used for flesh colors, that is, exposed human skin,[12] and for other subjects. This complicated part of the artistic process came to be called "ochrification."[13] Areas requiring flesh colors were covered with *sankir*, a mixed paint with an ochre base color. Concerning flesh colors, Hegel wrote, "the most difficult...in coloration, the ideal, the zenith for the colorist are the 'flesh colors' of the human skin." In antiquity, ochre was obtained from the island of Chios and the city of Sinope on the Black Sea.

White[14] was often mixed with other pigments to achieve highlights[15] on faces and objects. It is obtained through the oxidation of lead using vinegar, a process that takes about four weeks, after which it is ground into powder. In Russia, "lead-white" was made in central Russia (Yaroslavl) or imported via Archangel.

Black[16] was produced by burning firwood or bones; "bone black" should not be mistaken for "ivory black."

Red[17] was obtained from quicksilver (mercury sulfide) containing light red pigment, known for three thousand years in the south of Russia and the present day country of Georgia. Carmine red is obtained from the cochineal louse through a process discovered in 1517, and was mass produced more than a century later. It then came into use in icon painting.

Blue[18] was obtained from the following pigments: The pulverized semiprecious stone lapis lazuli was used to produce *ultramarine blue*, a color as expensive as it is delicate and flexible. It was already known in antiquity throughout the eastern Medi-

11 In Greek and Russian *ochra.*
12 In Greek *sarx, sarkoma;* in Russian *liknoye.*
13 In Russian *ochrenie.*
14 In Greek *psimuthion,* meaning "a cosmetic coloring;" in Russian *belila.*
15 In Russian *probely.*
16 In Greek *melas,* in Russian *chornila.*
17 In Greek *kinnaberis,* in Russian *kinovar,* in German *Zinnober.*
18 In Greek *kyanos,* in Russian *lazur,* "sky blue."

Above: Synaxis (Assembly) of the Apostles, Novgorod, 1432
The Apostles are standing in two loosely knit groups facing each other. With the exception of Peter, who holds a scroll in his hand, all of the other Apostles are depicted holding the gospels. Christ, their Master, hovers above the twelve on a clipeus, sending them out into the world to proclaim the gospel. On icons of the Synaxis (Assembly) of the twelve Apostles, it is generally Paul, depicted next to Peter, who is substituted for Judas instead of Matthias.

Serapis and Isis, panels of a triptych, Tempera, third century.
Although most antique portraits were done in the encaustic technique, tempera paints were also used in these two portraits. Depicted are the Egyptian fertility god, Serapis, and the goddess Isis, mother and sister of Osiris, who was originally worshipped as the personification of the ruler's throne; for that reason she wore the hieroglyph of the throne upon her head.

terranean region, including Egypt and Iran. *Indigo*, "Indian," was obtained in medieval times from a widespread dye-plant found in forests, and later from the indigo plant already known in ancient India, Egypt, and Mexico, arriving in Europe in the thirteenth century. It was used for paints as well as for dyes ("dyer's blue").[19] Because it was affordable, this color was popular in icon workshops. *Dove or mountain blue*[20] was most likely produced from vivanite, a sedimentary rock found in the Crimea and the Moscow region.

Green[21] was obtained from glauconite and volconsconite, soils found in Bohemia and Verona as well as in the Novgorod region. Green was used in icon painting extensively as a background, for "Mother Earth," for mountains, and generally for objects that did not need much highlighting. *Yar medyanka* (Russian) denotes a copper patina. *Malachite* was obtained from a green mineral.[22]

Purple,[23] the color of the elite in the state as well as the ecclesiastical hierarchy, has a long tradition reaching far back into antiquity in Mexico and Peru. The color purple was obtained from the purple snail and used to dye ceremonial garments, in the preparation of important secular and ecclesiastical documents, and for book illumination.

Yellow[24] was, in medieval times, the color of defamation (worn by Jews and prostitutes). It was, therefore, not commonly used for sainted persons. It was produced from the fruit of the buckthorn tree, cooked with other plant juices, and combined with alum or chalk powder to yield the color yellow. *Auripigment* (gold color, gold foil, King's gold and others) is an arsenic sulfite ranging from pale gold yellow to reddish yellow.

Gold, a precious metal, highly valued from the earliest times, is characterized by its brilliance, purity, and unchangeability. Actually gold is not a color, but rather a "shining," a revelation of "an indestructible, extravagant, inexhaustible, and immaculate radiance," as a sixth-century Church Father wrote. Gold is an *imperium* that does not incorporate any other colors, but only "tolerates" their peripheral existence as long as they are subordinate to it. Gold is a shadowless "radiance." Even more than purple, gold is the sign of the elite, the chosen ones. It is difficult, if not completely impossible, to describe gold as a color.

We remind ourselves that *temperare* means "to mix well," which refers in our context to the well-mixed color (of the paint) with a binding agent, without which the paint could not be applied. One of the earliest known binding agents was egg yolk and egg white (separated), along with fig milk, honey, beer, wine, rubber-tree milk, and others. These agents can be diluted with water, but they will not dissolve in water. The fast-drying paints must be applied very quickly and thinly, in contrast to the opaque application used in encaustic technique. Tempera colors have a dry, thin quality, in part because they cannot be smoothed out by heating, unlike the colors used in the encaustic technique.

Tempera painting replaced the encaustic technique slowly but surely following the Iconoclastic Controversy, as the Church gained more decisive control over the production of images. The portrayal of human

19 Its name in Russian is *krutik* or *siniler* ("dyer's woad").
20 In Russian *golubek*.
21 In Greek *chloros*, "green," *prasinos* "leek color;" in Russian *prazelen*, from *prazem*, "leek stone."
22 Greek *chrysokolla*, in Russian *zelen*.
23 Latin and Greek *purpura*, "a purple [snail]" or "a purple garment."
24 In Greek *arrenikon*, in Russian *zhelt* or *shishgol*.

reality "in the flesh" was not the goal of tempera painting as it was of encaustic painting, which was able to achieve this goal with its own specific means of artistic illusion. In contrast to this "seduction of the eye," tempera painting emphasized the intellectually spiritual, precisely because of its dryness and thinness. If the encaustic icon portraits of the sixth and seventh centuries still show the great realism characteristic of Late Hellenism, this aspect was inhibited now through the more or less fixed patterns (templates) that eventually became the standard for sainted personages and sacred events. This art of the *Greci* was later passionately rejected by the Italian Renaissance painters, but we should not forget that the art that followed the Iconoclastic Controversy produced many masterpieces, and we ourselves stand captivated by the stern gaze of many a saint.

Saint Catherine, Greek, around 1700.
The Emperor Maximinus (Maxentius) was attracted to Catherine, a highly educated and beautiful woman, daughter of King Costus. Since Maximinus could not answer all her questions, he called fifty learned men from all corners of the Empire to convince her to abandon her faith in Christ and sacrifice to the gods. When Catherine remained steadfast, and actually converted the scholars to Christianity, she was condemned to martyrdom on the wheel and then to decapitation. This icon shows her with her symbol, the martyr's wheel. Above at the left we see angels carrying her corpse to Mount Sinai for burial.

Left: Detail of above.

Right: The Annunciation to Mary, detail of a silk twill carpet, Byzantine, around 600.
Egypt and Syria were not the only centers of the textile industry. Quality textiles, as seen in this detail of a red carpet from around the year 600, were also produced in Byzantium under the Emperor Justinian. The scene of the Annunciation is depicted within a floral wreath. The demand for Chinese silk was so enormous that Justinian imported silk worms to ensure a sufficient supply for the production of damask and silk embroideries.

Below: The Mother of God of the Burning Bush with Saints, textile icon, Russian, fifteenth or sixteenth century.
This precious cloth is silk damask with embroidery in colored silk and silver and gold threads. Hovering within flames above two groups of standing saints is the Mother of God with the Immanuel, both flanked by an angel and a kneeling saint.

Page 243: Saint Cyril from the White Sea (Beloozero), textile icon, Russian, sixteenth century.
There are nineteen biographical scenes from the life of Cyril (d. 1247). In the central panel on a damask background, we see the figure of Cyril, one of the most important representatives of Russian monasticism. The clarity with which the smaller scenes are depicted even in the smallest detail attests to the high quality of Russian textiles.

In our context, the word "textile"[25] signifies fabrics of different materials (silk, linen, wool) produced in a variety of ways (weaving, knitting, needlework) designed for sacred use, including icons. Due to the material's sensitivity, only a few of these works have survived. Byzantine traditions in this area can be traced back to Egypt, Syria, and Persia. Chinese silk, imported since the middle of the sixth century, was costly for two reasons. First, it was expensive to import from far away, and second, there was a certain "sacred aesthetic" which, like ivory, demanded respect. A description of an altar cloth and its curtains in the Hagia Sophia in a text from the middle of the sixth century mediates something of the masterful Byzantine textile art, its materials, and its techniques even today.

"You priests, to whom such a holy office has been entrusted, unfold the Tyrian-dyed winding sheet with purple blossoms, cover the altar table with it, stretch down the four silver sides the smoothened side-panels, and show the multitude the golden splendor and the brilliant work of an accomplished artist's hand. One of these shows the sublime countenance of Christ. Neither a knife in the hand of a skillful artist nor the deft work of a needle, but rather a weaver's loom interlaced the threads in colorful splendor and created this altar cloth. Golden as a rose-colored Eos,[26] the mantle that envelopes the divine limbs shines forth,[27] but from the inner garment the purple red of Tyre shines forth."

Regardless of the material, the artwork received its true dignity through the depicted image, the icon. The standard cloth icons belong to this group, as well as ecclesiastical paraments and priestly vestments, on which we encounter the whole pictorial world of the Eastern Church. During the late Middle Ages, textile art developed in Russia independent of Byzantium, thanks to direct trade relations with the Near and Far East; this artwork reached its prime between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Holy Shroud or *epitaphios* is an example of this type of textile art. The Greek word denotes the entombment of Christ, which in Russian is called the *plashchanitsa*. On Good Friday, this sacred cloth is carried in solemn procession during Vespers and is placed on a "tomb" in front of the iconostasis; during the midnight service of Easter, it is carried through the central opening of the iconostasis, the royal doors, and placed upon the altar. The royal doors remain

open throughout the Easter season. It goes without saying that the embroidery on this fabric is magnificent.

In this context, we also want to mention the embroidered cloth that was placed under icons, a practice prevalent throughout the Byzantine-Slavic domain. In Russian it is called the *podvenaya pelena*, a cloth depicting personages, and placed underneath the icon. Many of these *peleny* are true masterpieces of embroidery. The depictions on these cloths primarily served what might be called "political iconography."

25 From the Latin *textile*, "embellished [perhaps also embroidered] robes."

26 Editor's Note: The name of the Greek goddess of the dawn; in Latin, Aurora.

27 Editor's Note: An Orthodox altar is usually roughly cubical in shape and the altar cloths are in five pieces; one covers the top of the altar and the four panels hang down the sides, sewn only to the four edges of the top, not to each other. The color, fabric, and allegorical meaning of each has changed from that described here. Here two layers of altar coverings are described: The undergarment, or *iliton*, made of white linen since the Middle Ages, is here made of the incredibly expensive crimson dye color of Tyre. The same color was apparently used on the top panel of the *indition*, or top layer, on which there was a depiction of Christ lying in the tomb (the Holy Shroud). Today, the priest unfolds an *antimension* of the same design on top of the indition, which is normally of rich brocade. The altar cloths are said to "envelop the divine limbs" because the altar was thought of metaphorically as representing Christ, and the altar cloths, therefore, clothed his body. Note that here, in the center of the empire, in the metropolitan cathedral, the altar was made of silver.

Above: The Apostle Andrew, gilded rolled-silver icon, Greek, fourteenth century.
The half-figure of Saint Andrew, with his characteristic thick hair, was created from the back side to create the embossed effect of this almost square panel of rolled silver.

Left: Tabletki of Three Saints, Russian, fifteenth or sixteenth century.
This is a double-sided tabletka from the Sophia Cathedral of Novgorod. The side shown here depicts the three saints Prokopius, Nicholas, and Eustathius. Each of the saints holds a cross in his hand, identifying him as a martyr.

Tabletki, Russian for "little boards," are icons of a smaller format. The material is not wood but rather a linen canvas saturated with oil, both sides of which were covered with gesso. Such icons were kept on the feast day tier of the iconostasis (cf. p. 218), taken down, and placed on a stand for veneration on the corresponding feast or saint's day. The painting of these images required a mastery of composition and color. The most well-known are the fifteenth-century tabletki in the Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

Modern research classifies most of the following materials and icons as "miniatures." We should, however, be aware that Byzantine-Slav craftsmen and those who commissioned and bought these works of art did not consider them "miniature" in value. On the contrary, *objets d'art* were considered equal in value to wall paintings, because of the costliness of their component materials and the artistic skills required to produce them. From a sacral or liturgical standpoint, it would have been unthinkable to differentiate between small pieces and wall paintings.

Repoussé work is labor-intensive. Using a steel rod or a "repoussé hammer,"[28] the desired shapes are hammered without heat from the back onto metal (preferably a soft metal). Icons produced this way are relatively rare, whereas other sacred objects, especially small reliquaries and metal fittings for icons, are more numerous, and are often masterpieces of this artistic technique. For reliquaries, gold and silver were used. Once again we see here the close relationship of icons to reliquaries.[29]

28 Italian *pimzone*, an "impress stamper."

29 Editor's Note: In some respects icons are a more popularly accessible alternative to the much rarer relics of the saints.

Above: Saint Demetrius on Horseback, steatite icon, Constantinople, fourteenth century. Like ivory, but less expensive and considerably more fragile, steatite is suitable for valuable artistic carving.

Left: The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, ivory tablet, Byzantine, tenth century.
This 17.6cm x 12.8cm ivory tablet was the central panel of a triptych. Above the forty martyrs (standing freezing to death in icy water), we see Christ enthroned, blessing them.

Next to mammoth tusk (fossilized ivory), walrus tusk, and hippopotamus tusk, the elephant tusk has been one of the oldest materials used for sculpture in all cultures of antiquity since the Neolithic Age. The art of carved ivory reached a peak around 500 B.C. in the portrayal of the gods using chryselefantine (gold ivory). This material was used in many ways, depending upon its properties and origin. For example, because of its hardness, Indian ivory was less suitable for carving. Ivory, rare and unique, with a soft shimmer evoking both tactile attraction and a feeling of respect and awe, conjured up an elitist religious aura. From very early on, it was considered an ideal material for icons.

The assumption that ivory was imperishable added substantially to its high value. Small, folding plaques (diptychs, triptychs) were frequently used as pictorial panels. Especially after the Iconoclastic Controversy, these became quite popular in ivory for private devotions as well as in the arena of ritual (on the beams of the rood screen—the forerunner of the iconostasis, in cathedrals, as pyxes, reliquaries, bishop's crosiers, and so on). Although the dates and origins of ivory works of art have recently been contested, it is certain that this art went through a renaissance in the sixth-century era of Emperor Justinian, and experienced several other revivals from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. Here we are talking about icons in a broader sense; frequently depictions on small cases used in a variety of ritualistic ways, generally as reliquaries.

Steatite[30] (or soapstone) is related to serpentine (cf. below). It is a pure white reflective substance, or, with impurities, gray, reddish, or yellowish. It is popular for carving because it is malleable and can be polished. It was not considered a substitute for ivory; but was valued for itself. Numerous, valuable liturgical objects and carved icons were made from it. It could also be further embellished with precious metals such as gold or silver.

30 From the Greek word *stear*, "tallow" or "fat."

Right: Saint Peter, detail of the Pala d'Oro from Saint Mark's Cathedral, Venice, last rendering, 1345.
The Pala d'Oro is probably the most valuable treasure of Saint Mark's Cathedral, heavily endowed with artistic treasures consisting of many Byzantine works of enamel. This is the golden sheet altar panel, measuring 2.12m x 3.34m. There are hardly any extant panels from the first golden altar, commissioned by the Doge Pietro II Orseolo (991–1009) in Constantinople. The Doge Ordelaffo Falier (1102–1118) commissioned a new altar panel, of which only larger parts are extant. In 1345, the Doge Andrea Dandolo had all extant parts from earlier times brought together to Venice, with booty probably taken from the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. These he combined with enamel tablets produced in Venice to create a unified whole in a gilded, Gothic frame. This illustration shows the Apostle Peter, carrying a scroll in his hand, looking directly at the beholder, whom he blesses with his raised right hand.

Left: John the Forerunner, metal icon with enamel inlay, Russian, around 1800.
Surrounded by a lavishly embellished border *(basma)*, John the Baptist, winged in this depiction, points to the child Jesus, the Lamb of God, lying on a plate. Like the background of the icon, the halo of the saint stretching out over the frame is embellished with blue and white enamel inlay.

Enamel[31] is melted glass applied to a variety of metals, such as copper, bronze, gold, or silver. The melted glass can be transparent or opaque, and its color is created by adding metallic oxides. There are three basic kinds of enamel work: *champlevé*, in which the design is created by making hollows in the metal; *cloisonné*, in which the design is outlined by thin strips of metal, preferably gold, fixed on edge; and *plique-a-jour*, an art form found in Russia and Hungary, in which twisted silver bars are used as a variation. In all of its forms, enamel has proven to be an appropriate material for the Byzantine aesthetics of light. Icon art is one of the primary uses of enamel, on liturgical and imperial vestments, crowns, and objects for rituals. The zenith of enamel art was reached at the end of the Iconoclastic Controversy in the ninth century. Most of the works that have been preserved are from the Byzantine imperial workshops.

In antiquity, the art of enamel work had already spread to the coastal regions of the Black Sea, into Georgia and Armenia, and came into use as a sacred ceremonial art quite early in Russia, finding a new home at the end of the fourteenth century as icon painting first blossomed.

31 In French and German, *email*, Greek *chymeuton*, and Russian *finift*.

Left: Adam and Eve, detail from the marble sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (d. 359), Rome, grottos of Saint Peter's Basilica.
Adam and Eve stand next to the Tree of Knowledge; the serpent winds itself around the trunk; and Adam and Eve look away from each other. They know guilt and cover their nakedness with their hands. This magnificent high relief, in which the almost fully sculpted, softly modeled figures seem almost to step forward, has the quality of the classical reliefs of antiquity.

Right: Bust of Christ, marble intarsia, Early Byzantine.
The bright figure of Christ with an enormous halo stands out against a dark marble background. The dark marble used for his hair, beard, and pupils stands in sharp contrast to the surrounding bright areas. While mosaics, through the use of tiny pieces of glass, could almost achieve the effect of a painting, the particular appeal of marble images consists precisely in its unrealistic expressive intensity.

Marble[32] is a granular, crystalline limestone, ranging in color from pure white to deep, dark black, with all colors in between. Because it was time consuming and costly to transport marble over land, it was an expensive material in antiquity and the Middle Ages. In addition, the alluring shimmer of marble and other elite materials used by the Byzantine successors of the Romans seemed to have a luminous quality that suggested spheres of reality beyond the merely material. And so sculpted marble came to be used for icons. With few exceptions, the themes and depictions of relief icons are the same as painted icons. From an art-history perspective, the ancient relief image became the prototype. Accordingly, the relief-icon reached its zenith during an era in which there was renewed interest in the art and literature of the Roman past, that is, during the Macedonian Renaissance (cf. p. 45). The artistic ideal of this period was humanist in nature, so exaggerated forms of expression were strictly avoided. The marble icons of saints produced during this era, ranging from shiny to matte, radiate the inner peace and serenity found in statues from antiquity. The art of these icons is very much within the tradition of the Roman Empire.

32 In Greek *marmaros*, in Latin *marmor*, and in Russian *mramor*.

Left: Saint Theodore, detail of a glazed ceramic icon, Preslav, ninth or tenth century. This badly damaged 55cm x 44cm plate is one of the few extant examples of Christian ceramic icons. In early Christian culture, ceramic art met with rejection or, at best, with skeptical reserve, while in the Islamic East it was quite popular.

Right: Pieta, behind-glass painting by Evelyna Peksova, Poland.
Mary and her lifeless Son, draped over her knees, are both wearing crowns. On both sides of Mary's head is an angel painted in the form of a flower. The striking contrast in colors is typical for naive folk art, which has a direct emotional appeal.

Ceramics[33] is the collective concept for products made of fired clay. The history of clay pottery, fired and glazed in a kiln at high temperatures, is reflected in the history of the deeply religious distinctions between Christian Byzantium, Sassanid, and Islamic Persia, all of which were characterized by an imperial doctrine of salvation. It is a history that can be traced back to the mythic past of antiquity. Ceramics of dark red, blue, and green tones belonged to the religious aesthetic of the Sassanids and their Islamic successors. In this religious "war" of sacred colors, Byzantium had always kept away from Eastern ceramic tile. On the contrary, Byzantium used its own elite material, ivory. It was only during the Iconoclastic Controversy, when it was considered fashionable to have things "made in Islam," that the ceramic art of an ancient foe was accepted into the Byzantine world. Considering the stubborn, self-perpetuating nature of religious traditions, it is no wonder that very few ceramic icons were made even later. Aside from this, ceramic's origin in the earthiest of earthly things, namely soil, did not recommend it as a material for icons.

33 From the Greek *keramos*, "potter's clay" and *keramikos techne*, "potter's craft."

Glass[34] is one of the oldest materials used in the cultures of humanity. Byzantium inherited very old formulas for glass production—some of which stemmed from the East which later became Islamic—and developed them further. Venice was one of the most important centers for the cultivation of Byzantine traditions. The quality and richness of glass production had already been enhanced in pre-Christian times by the invention of the glass-blowing pipe. Along with this, the production of glass vessels, especially those made of gold glass, was assured a significant future in liturgical use in the Church, and also as a medium for portraiture. Many of these vessels had pictures giving them a certain icon-like character.

Left: The Ascension of Christ and the Hospitality of Abraham, double-sided glass painting, Greek, seventeenth century.
This 19.5cm x 15cm glass plate was painted on both sides with feast day themes. Without a doubt both are by the same master. The figures are harmoniously grouped and the entire space is filled out without giving the impression of being overly full. Depending on the feast day, the icon could simply be turned around.

Right: Lamentation of Christ, glass icon, Transylvania, eighteenth or nineteenth century.
Two men have taken the corpse of Christ and laid it on a cloth. Before they carry his body away they allow the lamenting women to look once more at their beloved Lord. An angel mourns with them. Mary, in the center of this scene, folds her hands in resignation, and her whole posture expresses deep sorrow. This scene could be a private wake in a village where mourning relatives take leave of a beloved member of the family. Truly genuine folk art always has a direct emotional appeal.

The Romanian (Transylvanian) *behind-glass icons* represent a later special form of glass painting. Behind-glass painting was well-known in the neighboring countries of Austria, southern Germany, and Slovakia. It was not so much the difficulty of the technique of behind-glass painting, but rather that they were considerably cheaper than other icons, which led to their popularity among the poor peasantry and to proliferation in the nineteenth century. Each artistic phase in the production of these works of art is executed in reverse on the back side of the glass. Oil or tempera were used as well as transparent paints for shading. Eglomizing, named at the end of the eighteenth century for the French art dealer, Glomy, is the process by which black lacquer is applied to some areas of the glass, and the uncovered areas then decorated with shiny foil (metal, silver, gold). In glass etching, the outline drawing is then engraved through the foil. The Romanians in Transylvania at that time belonged to the Greek Uniate Church, which was in communion with Rome. Their behind-glass icons have their own iconography. The nativity scene, for instance, shows the stall and the manger, rather than the birth cave seen in the classical Eastern pictorial world. The expressiveness of these icons never ceases to fascinate. Behind-glass icons made a major contribution to the Uniate Church and helped it survive and remain united in difficult times.

34 Cf. Latin *glaesum*, "amber."

Metallic icons could be produced as repoussé (embossed), as already mentioned, or from molds, a method especially common in the nineteenth century. There were two techniques using molds, the "hearth casting" technique and the "lost wax" process. In the first procedure, the metal alloy was poured into a negative that had been carved into a stone. In the second procedure, a wax model was made and then covered with clay, which was heated until the wax melted and flowed out through thin channels. The resulting mold was then filled with molten metallic alloys (bronze made from copper and tin, or pewter from copper and zinc), and, after cooling, the mold was broken open. Bronze icons were often embellished with enamel, an artistic craft imitating champlevé. When finished, these icons were frequently "fire-gilded," that is, a very thin layer of gold amalgam (a gold and mercury alloy) was applied and the mercury evaporated. Bronze icons were also placed together as diptychs and triptychs and used as travel icons or for private devotions at home. The lower-quality icons made this way were not much better than mass-produced devotional kitsch. We dare not forget, however, that the artistic quality or craftsmanship of an image is not a gauge of the personal, religious relationship between an image and the person praying before it.

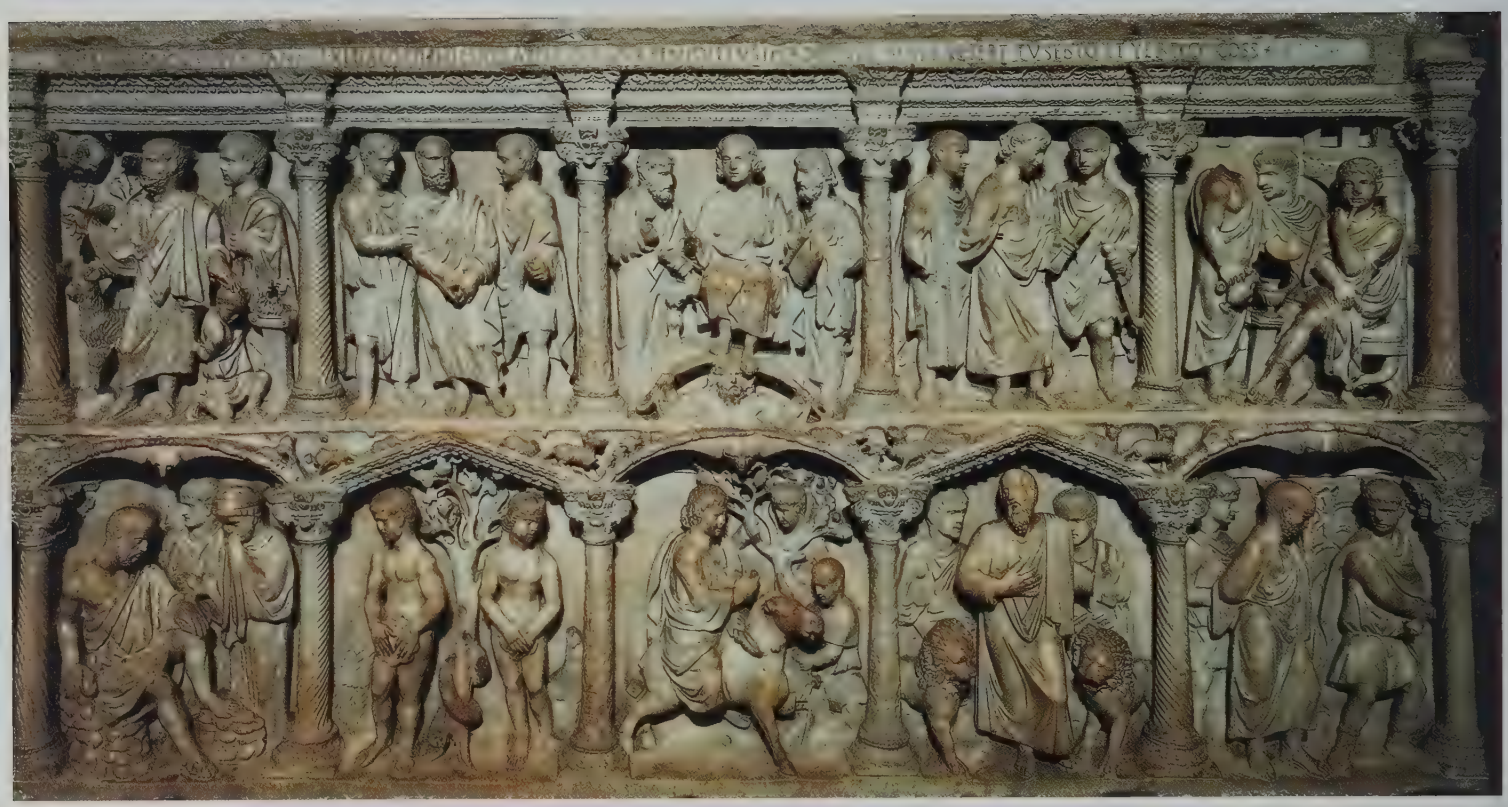
Above: Deësis, triptych with enamel inlay, Russian, nineteenth century.
The scroll Mary points to is inscribed, "Lord, full of grace, Lord Jesus, my Son and my God, hear the prayers of your Mother."

Left: A blessing cross, bronze with enamel inlay, Russian, around 1800.
In the Orthodox Church, the priest blesses the faithful with a specially designated blessing cross. On the upper part of the cross we see God the Father with adoring angels and the dove of the Holy Spirit. On the slanted beam, we see architecture symbolizing Jerusalem. Below the feet of Christ, as in painted crucifixion scenes, we see the skull of Adam.

Page 250, above left: Mother of God of Kazan, metal icon, Russian, around 1800.
This bronze icon is shown in its actual size.

Page 250, above right: The Image of Christ Not Made by Hands, enamel, Russian, nineteenth century.

Page 250, below: Saint Nicholas with Feast Days, bronze triptych with colored enamel inlay, Russian, nineteenth century.
In the central panel, Saint Nicholas is depicted as the Pantocrator with the book of Gospels in his left hand and his right hand raised in blessing. Above him, in the clouds, Christ hovers as High Priest. In the curved side wings at the top is the Annunciation, beneath it the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the Presentation in the Temple, the Anastasis (Christ's Descent into Hell), and the Ascension of Christ.



Above: Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (d. 359), marble, Rome, grotto of Saint Peter's. These nearly fully sculpted reliefs are equal in quality to the models of antiquity. This early Christian columned sarcophagus depicts a series of scenes, separated by columns, and is made of Pendelikon marble. There are two rows with five scenes in each, some from the Old Testament and some from the New Testament. In the center, Christ sits enthroned on a segment of the firmament and presents the scrolls of the law to Peter and Paul. Beneath this scene, Christ is depicted entering Jerusalem as a youth of Apollonian beauty. The Old Testament scenes are: (above left) Abraham is prevented from sacrificing his son, Isaac; and (below, second scene from the left) Adam and Eve beside the Tree of Knowledge. The inscription above the sarcophagus says that Junius Bassus, Prefect of the City of Rome, *lit ad Deum* "has gone to God" on the twenty-fifth of August.

Page 253: The Good Shepherd, marble, third century.
In antiquity, the figure of the shepherd with a lamb on his shoulders signified philanthropia or the love of humankind. Since Christians of the first centuries absolutely rejected full-blown statues, this beautiful little statue probably wasn't interpreted as "Christ, the Good Shepherd" until later.

The term "sculpture" comes from the Latin *sculpere*, "cut" or "chisel," and the Greek verb *plassein*, "to fashion," "shape," or "form." The iconophile Ecumenical Council of 787 had permitted "holy images, painted, sculpted, or created in whatever manner." An overview of the corpus of sacred art, however, reveals clearly that there are relatively few sculptures compared with the number of painted icons. There were several reasons for this. First, the early Christians had been confronted with statues of heathen gods and despots for quite a long time—sometimes forced to make sacrifices to them upon threat of death—and they had not forgotten them. Christians would not emulate this practice. Second, Christians thought that making art in humanlike forms was tantamount to usurping the creative power of God. Lastly, the Byzantine mind was quite aware of the three-dimensional space of "the flesh,"[35] that which is subject to sin and death, and there was a constant effort to keep the flesh under control or to subjugate it through harsh asceticism. This peculiar Byzantine spirituality, often hovering between mockery, irony, and seriousness, significantly influenced the Byzantine attitude toward free-standing sculpture. It was viewed with great reservation. With few exceptions, the most that was allowed was a suggestion of three dimensionality in bas-relief figures.

Russia was untroubled by such reservations. Even in pre-Christian times, the Russian forests had been an inexhaustible source of raw material for wood sculptures, several of which are extant. Immediately following the evangelization of Russia, two-dimensional, surface-bound portrayals were customary. After the end of the Middle Ages, however, we increasingly find three-dimensional depictions of saints, of the Mother of God, and of Christ.

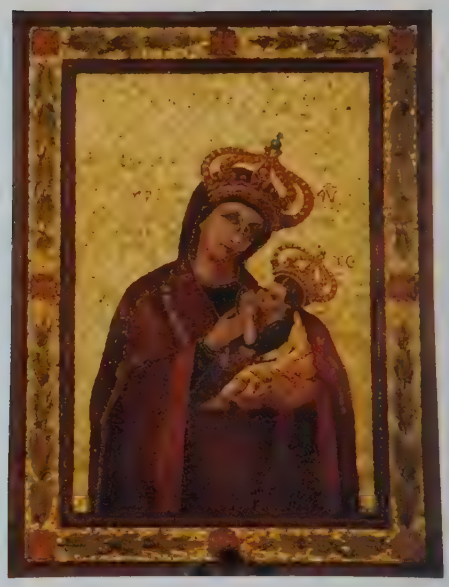
35 In Greek *sarx* means "flesh, body" and, in addition, "all of existence," "what we have done and left undone."

Right: Mother of God Panhagia Encircled by Apostles, woodcarving, Greek, end of the eighteenth century.
This circular image depicts Mary Orans with the Immanuel hovering in front of her and two angels behind her throne. In the frame that surrounds the All Holy (Panhagia), Christ is enthroned at the very top. A spiral frame encircles the heads of the Apostles and then returns to Christ.

Icons carved from wood with the subtle tendency of letting the carved figures of saints "step out" into three dimensions can be found as early as the Late Byzantine period in Macedonia. Ochrid was the center of this innovation. A similar tendency can be observed in Russia. There are superb examples of bas relief in all of the thematic groupings of Christian iconography from the fifteenth century. The art of woodcarving reached a peak starting in the seventeenth century, an era sometimes called Russian Baroque. Very expressive depictions were combined with a tendency to formalism, a union quite typical of the Baroque.

These carved icons, not known for their artistic value, provoked the indignation of ecclesiastical authorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, because they were objects of lesser quality; they were eventually prohibited. They are important because of their wide distribution throughout the vast area between the Carpathians and the Urals, even all the way to Siberia. The decisions of Orthodox Church authorities aside, non-Orthodox observers will easily like these icons if only because of the touching, sometimes awkward, way that simple religious craftsmen were able to express complicated themes with their woodcarving tools. Catholic influences are seen primarily in icons from the border kingdoms, that is, those sovereign states bordering both the Roman Catholic or Uniate Churches of the West and the Moscow Patriarchate of the East (cf. p. 66). We encounter in these icons a complete lack of pretense and a witness to the Orthodox faith, in contrast to "professional" iconography.

Left: Serpentine medallion with the image of Mary Orans, Byzantine, 1078–1081.
On the border is an inscription recommending Emperor Nicephorus III Bolaneiates (1078-1081) to the protection of the Mother of God.
The clipeus is 17.9cm in diameter.



Above: S. Vergine Maria della Grazia, Palestinian, sixteenth century.
This beautiful mosaic icon with the crowned heads of mother and child is at the Via di Porta Angelica in Rome, where it was brought in 1587 from Jerusalem.

Page 255: Saint Theodore Stratelates, mosaic icon, Constantinople, first half of the fourteenth century.
This deeply loved and revered military saint, Theodore, was the patron saint of the Byzantine army, who, according to legend, suffered martyrdom *(passio)* in the East at the beginning of the fourth century. Sometime later a distinction was made between two Theodores; one was the Recruit (the Tyro) and one was the General (or Stratelates). This icon of Stratelates shows a nobly clad man with a serious gaze. The icon is only 9cm x 7cm, and is made of the tiniest of tiny mosaic stones.

Serpentine, the stone that is reminiscent of a serpent's skin,[36] varies in color from red to brown, but is primarily green or greenish black. It can be speckled, veined, or mottled, and is quite suitable for grinding and polishing. Serpentine, like marble, may be used in a variety of ways, not the least for the production of carved icons. In regard to material and processing, we have indeed reached the outer limits of an art form, which has reached, in an artistic, intellectually spiritual sense, its fullest expression in panel painting.

Mosaic[37] is a depiction made with small cubes or tessarae of glass or natural stone placed into the still moist mortar of the surface of a wall or floor, or, in the case of icons, on a soft waxed surface. The high art of the mosaic artist consisted in laying the cubes not flat but rather slightly tilted, to enhance the lighting effect in accordance with sacred Byzantine aesthetics. The sum of these minimal optical effects produced the colored-light shimmer of the material, which is unique to mosaic and which seems to be an invitation to look on that which is immaterial. Mosaic art reached its peak in all sacred and secular areas during the age of Hellenism. At the same time, mosaics encouraged illusion in the decoration of a wide variety of interiors, creating, last but not least, a celestial impression, which quite naturally met the needs of church interiors. The origin of mosaic technique and of the psychology to which we alluded was the East, home to a plethora of handicraft arts that used light as a completely accessible and available material, often stretching the artistic expression of speculation about the part light plays in the mystical experience. Pressed together onto the smallest of spaces, these associations can be felt in mosaic icons.

36 Latin *serpens*, serpent; Greek *ophis*, serpent.

37 Arabic *masauvag*, jewelry, Latin *opus musivum, opus musaeum*, Italian *mosaico*.

Above: The Annunciation to Mary, Russian, sixteenth century.
Frightened and surprised, Mary turns around as the Angel Gabriel addresses her. This icon is fitted with a *basma* (border covering) and a silver covering for the inner panel (*oklad* or *riza*), so that only the painted figures of Mary and the angel remain uncovered.

Icon covers have a practical as well as a spiritual function. An icon cover protects the icon from external influences (such as candle soot, dust, or physical damage) and serves as a dignified casing for the icon, just like the reliquary for a venerated relic. The pious custom of kissing icons most certainly contributed to the need for protective coverings. The covering is not part of the original icon. But neither is it a random addition or an accessory. Rather, it is like a garment that grows old with the person wearing it.

The first icon coverings may be traced as far back as the thirteenth century. Icons were fitted around the edges with coverings made of precious metals and decorated with portraits, scenes, or simple designs. Sometimes they had pictures corresponding to the scenes painted on the outer border of the icon. The practicality of the covering around the edges probably led to expanding the covering so that it took up more and more space on the surface, sometimes nearly covering the original image completely. The spiritual origins of the covering, however, can be found at the heart of the Orthodox doctrine of images. An image, the true material copy of a spiritual immaterial prototype once it has been created, can be duplicated at will on the basis of its own internal, divine creative energy.[38] In this way, the painted images underneath the covering are not only repeated, but the covering itself acquires a kind of material autonomy.

Icon coverings are classified as follows: The Russian *basma* extends from the edge of the image over the surface, and resembles a modern-day picture frame. (There is still a street in the old part of Moscow today named after the craftsmen who made this type of cover.) The Russian *oklad*, also called a *riza*, covers everything on the surface of the picture, with the exception of the persons depicted. In both cases we are dealing with gilded and appropriately embellished silver sheets, often adorned with precious gems and small enamels. Small oil lamps, decorated with more or less tasteful devotional objects, were usually fastened to the icon with a bracket. These additions gradually brought about a change in the original dignity of the icon. This change was most obvious with the *podubornoe pismo* type of covering, where nothing at all under the covering was painted except the depicted person, which the covering did not cover. When podubornoe pismo coverings are removed, you see grotesque free-floating heads, hands, and feet. The creative impulses mentioned above had quite literally run dry.

38 In Greek, *energeia.*

Left: Saint John the Divine, Russian, early seventeenth century.
The Evangelist is deep in silent contemplation. The covering, made from a single piece of metal, is a riza, leaving only the image of Saint John visible.

Below: The Annunciation to Mary, Russian, around 1800.
On this fully painted icon, the figures of the angel and the Mother of God are covered with a relief-like oklad, leaving their faces, hands, and feet visible. The unusual combination of a painted background with oklad figures makes this icon uniquely charming.

Left: The Nativity of Mary, Russian, fourteenth century.
After the birth, Saint Anna is on her bed, lovingly cared for while the women bathe little Mary (depicted at the lower right). This intimate scene is surrounded by an engraved metal border, a basma.

Mother of God Petrovskaya, Russian, first half of sixteenth century.
This icon is named after the archetype, the Mother of God of the Moscow Metropolitan Peter. This icon differs from the prototype in that Mary slightly tilts her head towards Jesus and that his cheek lovingly caresses his mother's cheek as typical for the Eleusa type icon. The wide metal frame (basma) surrounding this extremely precious icon is itself decorated with engravings, jewels, and inlayed oval icons. Mary's maphorion, draped over her head like a veil, is embellished with pearls and gems. While the metal aureole of the Christ child is only partially visible, the wide, richly adorned aureole of the Mother of God extends up past the edge of the picture providing the base for a three-pointed crown.

THE PICTORIAL LANGUAGE OF ICONS

The pictorial world of icons is not a product of a painter's devout fantasy or "creative spontaneity," but rather owes its spiritual and material existence to the strict adherence to a text. The pictorial world of icons as the process of communication with the praying beholder raises a question which is not as simple as it sounds: Why do Orthodox and non-Orthodox people alike understand icons? Understanding a person or image requires, on one hand, the desire to understand, and, on the other hand, the desire to be understood. We are referring here to the "techniques" used when two partners try to understand each other. We will now consider the dialogue between the sacred image and the believer. The issues we will consider are divided into three areas.

1. An image, silent with no language and no desire to communicate, is a contradiction in itself. From the very moment a dot appears on a white surface, it becomes an image. It has something to say and starts to speak. All art, whether literature or fine art, is dependent on communication and mutual comprehensibility. This is a problem with abstract art. Although abstract art may be rooted in icon painting, icon painting has never been abstract art. Quite the contrary. The very meaning of its material existence consists of spiritual communication, that is, making its pictorial world understandable. Abstract art is, in a sense, a secret language, and only those who know this language are able to understand these works of art. As already stated, one of the origins of abstract art was icon painting. The way figures and objects in a painting are positioned reminds us of what is called the transparency of a composition, the perspective in modern painting. The same thing is true for body language, which enabled the portrayed individuals to "bring to expression," as it is aptly put, what moved them inwardly. Many of these forms of expression are very old and still practiced daily in our times.

2. It is easy to depict a space on an image because both space and image are immovable. That changes of course as soon as something happens, something or someone moves into the space—but this is not the moment for a discussion of absolute time. Again and again, it is exciting and intriguing to see how artists were able to solve these problems long before Galileo and Newton.

3. Everyone who has ever been to the theater knows what they will see if the curtain rises with the actors and actresses not yet on the stage—they will see the set or the backdrop. Basically, what we perceive as the backdrop of icons is a background, the abstract nature of which reminds us again of the art by that name. The history of the development and function of backdrops from antiquity up to the baroque theater and the relationship of backdrops to the pictorial world of icons provide some interesting insights into the relationship between cultural history and icon painting in general.

Page 260: Saint John the Divine, Russian, sixteenth century.
The dramatically expressive head of the Apostle John is portrayed in the gesture of silence surrounded by a beautifully chiseled halo. His wrinkled forehead and wide open eyes, which seem to look inward, create the impression of deeply mindful absorption. This corresponds to the gesture of his hand with his fingertips drawn toward his thumb. This gesture, customary with the Hesychasts, was used to help them sink into an intense concentration that sometimes led to rapture and visions of the divine light. This type of mystical vision stems from Simeon the New Theologian (949–1022). After Hesychasm had been suspected of heresy for a time, it was recognized by the Eastern Church in the fourteenth century as a legitimate means of attaining knowledge of God.

PERSPECTIVE AND PROPORTION

Even when looking at an icon for the first time, a non-Orthodox person, especially a modern observer, will realize that he or she must approach this object differently than he or she is accustomed. The arrangement of the individual elements in the picture in relation to each other, the "syntax," is essentially different from the pictures and pictorial texts that we are used to. This is particularly true regarding the use of perspective in icons. The word perspective[1] means "the arrangement of the internal pictorial subjects and objects on a two-dimensional plane in such a way that they are recognizable to the beholder." In other words, the beholder must be able to "spell" the pictorial text.

Let us attempt to elaborate upon this, using the icon of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste as an example of how the style of icon painting contrasts with the concept of a central perspective, which modern viewers are more accustomed to seeing. Seeing from a central perspective is foreign to our natural way of seeing, foreign to the way we look at things as children. When a child paints a pot, she stands up and looks at the pot from above, then sits back down and in two strokes, paints a circle. In relation to the central perspective, this is the inverted perspective. Central perspective assumes a horizontal line on the surface, with a vanishing point on this line where all lines converge. Everything behind the horizontal line will get smaller and smaller until objects completely disappear. In the icon of the Forty Martyrs, most of the soldiers would disappear, as would the Christ in benediction from the heights of heaven. By using inverted perspective, the artist avoids that problem, and allows the whole scene of martyrdom (though only a selection, of course) to be presented. The various groupings and diverse reactions of the soldiers can be easily portrayed this way. We have the impression that the figures are situated on a grandstand, which gets higher in the back so that we can see each of the figures. Perhaps it would be more accurate to speak of narrative or epic perspective than inverted perspective, because this perspective translates a narrative text into a pictorial one.

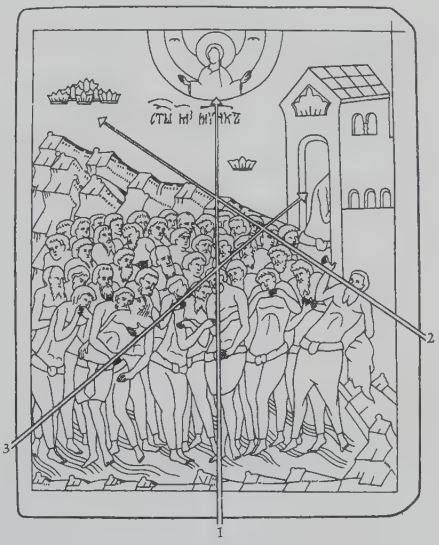
Another transparent mode of depiction is from the perspective of figures that are larger or smaller according to their significance. In this perspective, the most important persons are depicted up front, on a two-dimensional surface, larger than the less important persons. In various genres, this is expressed in different ways. For example, an icon from thirteenth-century Novgorod portrays Yevans, the ascetic writer of the ancient Church known as John Climacus,[2] as an over-sized, immense figure reaching up to the heavens, unlike George and Vlasy, the saints of farm and field. John Climacus was thinking completely different thoughts than his companions, patrons of the earth and animals.

The perspective of significance is similar to the concept of proportion, that is, the relationship of the parts of a figure to each other and to the whole and vice versa; this corresponds to the Greek concepts *symmetria* and *analogia*. The concept of proportion was used as early as classical antiquity. It was closely associated with a comprehensive, universal (cosmic) worldview, inasmuch as the proportions of the human body were thought to reflect predetermined patterns of the universe. In antiquity, there were two methods of utilizing the laws of proportion, a fixed model and a dynamic model. The fixed model can best be assessed in Near Eastern artistic monuments, primarily from ancient Egypt. Here, the fist was the customary *modulus*, the smallest measure that could be multiplied. The Egyptians used a standardized square plan system, immobile and inflexible, but very practical. The Greeks' views in this regard were quite clearly in contrast to this model. They believed in internal and external freedom, a freedom or *autonomia* granted by nature to the individual. But they also remained prisoners of the surface in their use of a planimetric procedure.

When some artists and theoreticians suggested using the head as a modulus for the proportions of the human body, this measurement became the standard in Byzantine-Slav icon painting.

The *Painters' Manual of Mount Athos* determined that "the natural human being measures nine heads from forehead to the soles of the feet." The smallest measurement is the nose, a human organ dignified by God when he blew his own life-giving spirit into it at creation.[3] Icon painting and wall paint-

Page 262: The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, School of Novgorod, fifteenth or sixteenth century.
During the persecution of the Christians in the fourth century, forty Cappadocian soldiers were sentenced to martyrdom because they refused to renounce their faith in Christ, a martyrdom which consisted of spending a whole night in ice-cold water. When the heathen officer standing guard saw that only one of them escaped into the warm bath house (where he immediately fell over dead), he decided to join them in Christian martyrdom as the fortieth man and thus won for himself the martyr's crown. The iconography of the forty martyrs stems from Byzantine depictions, but this pictorial motif was also very popular in Russia. In order to portray each one of the courageous Christians, the painter painted their heads above each other using inverted or optical perspective. This icon tells the story of the martyrdom in detail, making it an icon in narrative style.



The outlined drawing of this icon shows three arrows indicating the three epic perspectives. The end point of Arrow One going through the middle of the picture points to Christ in the pose of benediction above. Arrow Two goes from the right edge of the picture over the head of the outermost martyr to indicate the crowns of martyrdom. Arrow Three begins on the left edge of the picture at the bottom and follows the escapee.

Page 265: Saint John Climacus with Saints George and Vlasy, Russian, second half of the seventeenth century.
The disproportion in size of the three saints standing next to each other is intentional, underlining the greater importance of John Climacus. Like the two accompanying him, George on the right and Vlasy on the left, John Climacus stands facing the beholder.

Proportional pattern of a sitting figure: Using the pictorial theme of the Fatherhood, the measurements are based on the head as a unit of measurement (modulus). The entire figure is nine and one-third moduli; the torso is three, the thighs and calves are two each, the face is one-third, the hair to the part is one-third, the neck is one-third, the knee is one-third, the angle to the sole of the foot is one-third. The nose is also one-third, so that all moduli are genuine body measurements.

Proportional pattern of a bowed head: Proceeding from the length of the nose as the modulus for the radius of the circles, the center of the image is not at the bottom of the nose, but rather in the outer corners of the eyes or in the pupils (point A). If you make a circle from point A with a radius of two nose lengths, you obtain the outer dimensions for the rounding of the skull, and at point C, the width of the half of the head turned from the beholder, which, if viewed frontally, would create an AC line of two nose lengths; the area within the three-quarter profile, however, is as much longer as point A is from the central line of the face (point B).

Proportional pattern of a head: In the mandylion of Christ, the measurements of the head are based on the length of the nose. The center of the three circles lies at the nasal openings. The radius of the first circle gives the height and width of the forehead, beginning with the hair on the forehead. The radius of the second circle, which measures two nose lengths, determines the height of the skull and the bottom of the chin. The radius of the third circle, which measures three nose lengths, passes through the neck and determines the dimensions of the halo.

Movement pattern: The movement in the image of the Mother of God Donskaya is not frontal or parallel to the beholder, but moves toward the observer and leads back again to the image. The movement, subdivided into individual movements, has the effect of letting Mary's face turn lovingly to the child Jesus, bending over him.

ing both remained true to the planimetric procedure, because they corresponded to the Eastern Church's notion of the good order of the cosmos, in which human beings are arranged and integrated with their bodies. This procedure is used for head portraits and the angle of the head, as well as in depictions of figures standing and sitting. Art in the Eastern Church remained decidedly reserved about the Greek notion of the internal and external freedom of humankind. The Church did not relax this reserve until the end of the Middle Ages, and then primarily in the Baroque period with its unabashed delight in the human body. Even then, it was not completely relinquished, and some of the traditional aesthetic forms were retained.

1 The word comes from the Latin *perspicere*, meaning to "look through" or "know exactly."
2 His nickname, John of the Ladder ("Climacus"), comes from the Greek word for ladder, *klimax*, because of the title of his best-known work, *The Ladder to Paradise.*
3 Genesis 2:7.

ЄѢЛНΣ
ΑΓΙΟΣ
ГЄѠРГНІ
ВЛАСІН

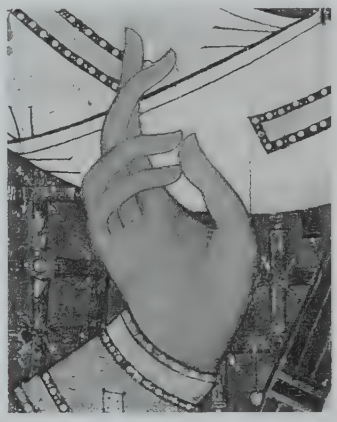
BODY LANGUAGE

One of the most difficult and interesting tasks of fine art is that of portraying language, the most significant form of human expression. It goes without saying that the painting of the Eastern Church understood this as a language subject to *askesis*, "spiritual discipline." There were antique prototypes for this, not the wildly gesticulating popular speakers, but rather the philosopher speaking with studied expressiveness. Body language encompasses four areas: gesture, signs, physiognomy, and mimicry. For the Church Fathers, the "silent" body language mediated by painting had a higher religious value than the usual language of material reality using sound and tones. In this context it should come as no surprise that gesture[4] is the body language of icons, inasmuch as gesture circumscribes the conscious, intentional movement of the hands. In contrast to gesture, physiognomy is an unintentional bodily or facial signal emanating from an emotional situation.

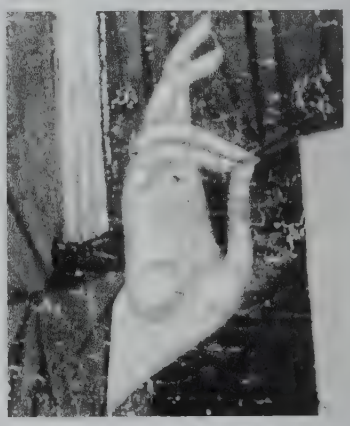
Below: In the Greek and Russian benediction gesture of Christ (illustrations one and four), we see the same manual sign imitating the Christ monogram: The tip of the ring finger touches the top of the outstretched thumb. The little finger remains outstretched. The middle finger crosses the slightly bent index finger.

Greek benediction gesture of Christ

Greek gesture of blessing



Russian gesture of blessing



Russian benediction gesture of Christ

The Greek gesture of blessing (illustration two) involves slipping the ring finger into the loop produced by thumb and little finger, while the curved middle finger crosses the outstretched index finger.

The Russian gesture of blessing (illustration three) is the easiest to perform: The tips of the ring finger and the little finger touch the tip of the outstretched thumb. The middle finger crosses the index finger.

The prevalent and habitual *gesture of blessing*, or benediction, is the primary example of gesture in sacred painting. In this gesture, the index finger and middle finger touch the thumb as a symbol of the Trinity, as the ring finger and little finger refer to belief in the two natures of Christ. The Russian Church introduced the three-finger cross (thumb, index and middle finger touching, with the ring finger and little finger wrapped around each other) in the seventeenth century, and the Old Believers retained the five-finger-cross (in which the tips of the thumb, ring finger and little finger touch with the index finger and middle finger outstretched alongside each other). In the *intercessory gesture*, the intercessors either hold their hands folded or partially opened and raised at face level. The saints on an iconostasis often use this gesture. The gesture of silence consists of placing the thumb, index finger, and middle finger together and holding them in front of a closed mouth. Gestures of lamentation and grief are very old. What is often understood as a spontaneous gesture, like the hands of Mary Magdalene raised in lamentation in front of the dead Christ, is really a formalized gesture of considerable antiquity.

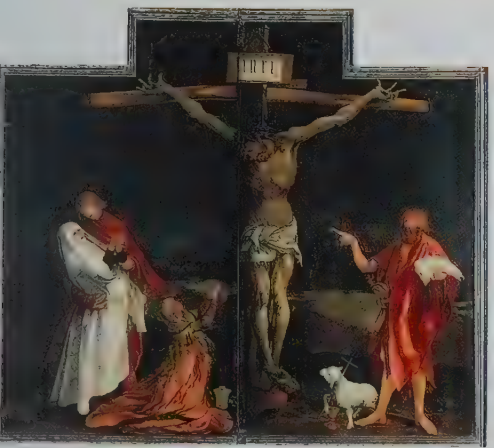
Early on the Church looked down on excessive expressions of grief at the grave. We see the remaining witnesses of the death of Jesus standing by his bier in reserved mourning. A quite remarkable gesture is the *pointing gesture* (the *deiktic* gesture), with which John the Baptist refers to his own severed head on the plate. The most renowned deictic gesture is the outstretched index finger of John in Grünewald's painting of the crucifixion with the text, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." This is quite in character with Gothic realism, but very foreign to the Orthodox understanding of the sacramental nature of Christ crucified. The *gesture of greeting* is customary for the Archangel Gabriel on depictions of the Annunciation, along with the humble posture of

4 From the Latin, an "attitude or movement (of hands and body)."

Left: Saint John the Forerunner in the Wilderness, side of a tabletka, Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, Novgorod, fifteenth or sixteenth century.
John the Forerunner is shown as if preaching repentance and conversion to an audience not depicted. His posture, bowed sideways, and the eloquent gesture of his raised right arm are signs of his inner zeal and the urgency of his words.

Below: The Mother of God Akhtyrskaya, detail, southern Russia, eighteenth century.
The hands of Mary are raised to her breast and slightly opened toward each other in the intercessory gesture. This hand gesture can be

found primarily in depictions of saints on the deësis tier.



Left: Isenheim Altarpiece, Matthias Grünewald, Colmar, 1512 or 1516.
This gesture, in which John the Baptist refers with outstretched index finger to the Crucified as the Son of God, is very impressive and unforgettable to everyone who sees this dramatic, large pictorial panel.

Above: The Transfiguration of Christ, Feofan Grek, end of the fourteenth century.
The Transfiguration, in which the humanity of Jesus is illuminated in post-Easter radiant glory, and in which his divinity is revealed through his human nature, appears quite early on icons. In the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, there is a depiction of the Transfiguration from the twelfth century on a beam of the iconostasis, just as it later became an indispensable part of the feast day images on later Russian iconostases. The icon of master Feofan Grek illustrated here shows the transfigured Jesus in a white robe inside a six-pointed bundle of rays, in the center of aureole circles of subtly changing colors. Like Jesus, the Prophets Moses and Elijah on either side stand on a peak of Mount Tabor. At the bottom of the picture, we see Peter, John, and James thrown to the ground, terrified by the vision and struck blind by the supernatural light. In the middle of the picture, we see the three Apostles following Jesus up the mountain at the left and, at the right, descending with him later.

Mary as an answer to the message of the archangel. The *posture of conversation*, with corresponding gestures in the give-and-take of question-and-answer so beloved in the Byzantine-Slav culture, is recognizable even in frontally-portrayed figures. Spontaneous gesture language is much less frequent than traditional gestures (see references to mimicry below). One of the best examples is the iconography of the Transfiguration of Christ.

Physiognomy, from the Greek *physiognomia*, the art or science of determining character on the basis of facial anatomy (as the word itself implies), opens up a broad area for the study of the faces of the saints. This whole area is also subject to a strict set of rules, especially for the face of Christ and the Mother of God. But the epithets which the faithful have given to the various types alone (such as "with gentle look," "the ca-

Left: The Mother of God Appears to Saint Sergei of Radonezh, School of Moscow, first half of the sixteenth century.
Shortly before his death, Saint Sergei had a vision of the Mother of God, who approaches him with the Apostles Peter and John. Sergei entrusts to her care the Monastery of the Trinity which he founded, and the Mother of God promises to keep the monks under her protective care. Mary and Sergei approach each other with the speaking gestures of raised arms and hands wide open. Behind Sergei we see his disciple and biographer, Epiphanius the Wise.

ressing," "angry eye," and so on) indicate that there were definitely a variety of possibilities in the artistic treatment of facial expression, or physiognomy.

"Mimicry" refers primarily to the theatrical art of *mimesis*, the imitation of a certain type of person. In icon painting, the best example is the face of John the Forerunner (the Baptist), which is an imitation of the classical tragedy mask. Concurrently, the entire life and death of a person, including hope in the resurrection, constitutes a *mimesis*, an imitation of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The unfolding of an expressive art, a kind of religious expressionism, has very limited possibilities. The mimicry of holy persons as created in late Byzantine art proves this fact quite conclusively. The existential meaning of the theatrical went through a kind of renaissance of individual mimicry of the sainted figures during the Baroque period, which also had an effect on icon painting.

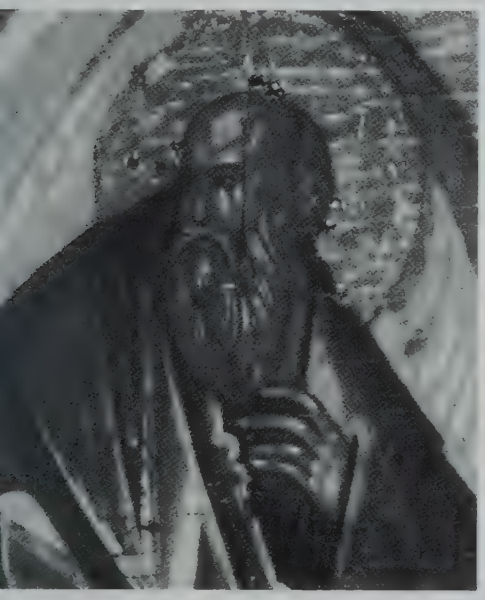
Left and above: Details of the Transfiguration of Christ, Feofan Grek, end of the fourteenth century.
To the left of the transfigured Jesus, we see Elijah with his arms crossed over his chest in bowed, reverent posture, with a referential gesture toward the Son of God in the beaming light. Peter, arms raised in a gesture of awe, is the first to manage to look up to his beloved Lord. James tries to come to an upright position, but keeps his hands over his eyes in fear of the glistening light of the divine revelation.

The life and death of a person take place within the framework of a specific space and time. According to Greek thought, adopted in icon painting, space and time relate to each other analogously. Just as there is a specific place[5] in space,[6] so also in time (a "space" of time) there is a specific "point," *kairos*, an opportune or "right" time. Greek art used to represent *kairos* as a jumping child with a long braid of hair. *aionos chronos*, "eternal temporality," thus made their way into the world of icon painting. We could also refer to a saying attributed to the German thinker and shoemaker, Jakob Böhme, "Whoever treats time like eternity and eternity like time will be liberated from all strife."

2. Considerably more difficult for the beholder is the depiction of the "complicated" rendering. In this model, events are portrayed in a single picture, with no boundaries separating them from each other. In other words, the beholder must hunt for specific motifs and scenes and will meet with success only if the corresponding texts are available and the beholder has committed them to memory.

3. The third possibility subsists in the form of pictorial strips depicting the stations in the biography of a person or the unfolding of historical events. These series are horizontal or vertical, depending on the situation. This creates a surprising, cinematographic effect as events unfold, one after the other, before the beholder's eyes. In contrast to film, however, the viewer can spend an extended period of time concentrating on an individual scene. This form of presentation has a long tradition; we find it in the pictorial strips of Roman victory columns, for instance. In a Proustian "remembrance of things past," the icon found this form again, using methods known to humankind for ages, still able to elicit the respect of the modern *homo electronicus*.

5 Greek *topos*.
6 Greek *chora*.
7 Russian *srednik*.



How was it possible to depict three-dimensional space and the time belonging to it on a two-dimensional surface? We have already seen how space was mastered in the chapter about perspective. For the unity of space and time, icon painting developed the following pictorial possibilities.

1. The saint is portrayed as the *central image*[7] in the middle, and around him or her are peripheral scenes from his or her life, a *vita*, a kind of visual biography. This was true for wonder-workers about whom there was little historical record, but for whom liturgical texts or hagiographies existed. Even here the rule applied: no text, no image. The central depiction shows a quiet, unemotional saint, with his or her biography unrolling all around, with all its often horrible events from the cradle to the grave. This practical method is also used to depict the fate of a miraculous icon, its "translations." Greek and Byzantine ideas of time as *enchronos aion*, "temporal eternity," and as

Above: Icon in Four Parts, Novgorod, first half of the fifteenth century.
It seems obvious here that this work was commissioned by someone who wanted to see four favorite biblical scenes combined on one icon. From left to right, above, the Raising of Lazarus and the Hospitality of Abraham; below, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and John on Patmos. The somewhat enlarged last panel in the series shows the Evangelist dictating his visions of the apocalypse to his disciple Prochorus.

Page 270: Saint Dmitri of Priluck, Dionysius, Vologda, end of the fifteenth century.
Encircling the central portrayal, where Dmitri stands facing forward gazing directly at the beholder, we see sixteen separate biographical scenes, his vita. All vita icons are painted biographies. We see successive scenes of a saint's life as it progresses from devout childhood and youth, attaining the special grace of sainthood and working miracles, to the saint's steadfastness in not renouncing the faith even in the face of torture or threat of execution. These vita narratives were meant to edify and strengthen the faithful.

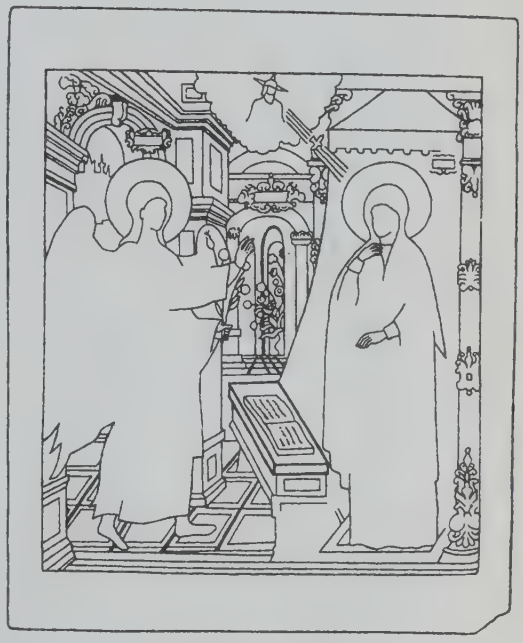
The ideal background of an icon, that is, the background most corresponding to iconographic essence, would be gold as a "non-color," as the "color of imperial eternity, which consumes all material objects." It was not possible to continue using this solution, because of the cost, and for artistic reasons. The theater of Late Antiquity served as a significant model for the development of inner-pictorial backgrounds (backdrops).

Ancient theatrical venues consisted of the *skene* or stages, with the *logeion* or lectern of the actors, and the *thyromata* in the background. The *thyromata* were large painted wooden panels. They are more or less the equivalent of the scenery or stage sets customary since the sixteenth century. As we know from paintings preserved under volcanic ash in Pompeii and Boscoreale (middle of the first century B.C.), with very few exceptions this *skenographia* or scenic painting was executed in a linear perspective. Various elements (doors, portals, bay windows, arcades, and so on) were exchangeable as movable scenery. This exchangeability created a situation in which the arrangement could take on a more or less abstract form; its formalism, as an architectural cliché, was at best adequate to suggest the desired scene to the imagination. We should keep one basic fact in mind, however: The dialogue scene at the lectern *in front of* the backdrop really takes place *behind* it, that is, in the illusion suggested by buildings and parts of buildings. At the same time, we should also remember that there is a psychological factor at work here. The human quest for knowledge, with its (to some minds) "illegitimate" daughter curiosity, drives us to know what the space behind the backdrop looks like. The goal of this quest for knowledge lay in making the backdrop as close to reality as possible, since for the Greek mindset truth and reality are one and the same, *aletheia*.

The history of the development of the background or backdrop in icon and wall painting may be thus briefly described. In the wake of late Hellenistic art, early Christian masterpieces of all genres evinced a cautious mixture of linear and inverted perspectives in the composition of backdrops. During the classical Byzantine era, movable scenery was made with virtuosity sometimes bordering on affectation. For example, the openings of architectural elements with their extended axes were so clumsily arranged that the characters had to stand on top of them, as in the Annunciation of the Mother of God, Mary and the Archangel. The palatial appearance of the building itself was a play on Marian texts in which Mary is given honorary titles such as "spiritual palace" and "temple of God." The axial architectural elements, often oriented in bizarre ways, are not only part of Marian pictorial themes, but of all scenes involving dialogue. In this way, the inner emotions and tension between characters could be expressed, which, in accordance with the universal understanding of this art, are also expressed in the backdrop. During the latter period of icon painting, especially in the border areas between East and West (see page 66), it was common to borrow ideas from Baroque theater for the painting of backdrops. For instance, scenes from the life of a saint were placed in idyllic forest settings, or events of a saint's later life can often be seen in rooms opened in the front in a formal building.[8] The next and final step consisted of depicting parts of rooms and movable scenery, as well as rather realistic interiors with corridors and windows opening onto courts and landscapes. Just as the traditional plainsong of classical choral works gave way to polyphony, singing with notes, so icon painting had to accommodate itself to the aesthetic requirements of a society whose motto was *docere, movere, delectare* ("teach, excite, enjoy"). Although icons remained bound to texts, the language had changed. It was no longer the language of the Middle Ages, but rather the language of the people of modern times.

8 In Russian *nutrovaya palata.*

Page 272: The Annunciation, Russian, Ivan Maximov, 1670.
The Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary, one of the greatest themes of Christian art, has challenged artists of every century. The scene appears to be simple, since only two persons are portrayed in relation to each other. Precisely because we are not dealing



with an outwardly dramatic scene, but rather with a sublime mystery that concerns the salvation of humankind, the artist as a believer must be filled with depth of faith and sensitivity (and tenderness) in order to mediate to the praying beholder this subtle, intimate scene. The theme of the Annunciation has remained unchanged through time, but the depiction has changed. Whereas earlier icons of the Annunciation showed Mary and the angel calmly facing each other, later depictions show the angel approaching Mary in great haste with a flowing garment. Mary is no longer standing, but is seated on a throne and turns her head toward Gabriel. This depiction continued until the fourteenth century when the messenger of God was depicted arriving in a dramatic flourish with a vehement flapping of wings, and Mary, deeply shocked, made gestures of fear. The Ivan Maximov icon depicts the angel and Mary both calm and in a more conservative stance. Here the background has developed beyond the earlier architectural backdrops into a more Western style.

The drawing (above) illustrates the depth of perspective.

THE ICON AS A WORK OF ART

A work of art has a fundamental independence, closely bound to human creativity. It is precisely this independence that was the central problem of the bitter Iconoclastic Controversy (see page 20). In creating a new being in a work of art, do we in fact enter into direct competition with the creative sovereignty of God? At the very moment that a pious artist puts his brush into the paint pot, he begins, in a sense, to compete with God. The prayers prescribed for this occasion could not alone protect him from this danger. As always with problems where physical existence seems to usurp the dignity of a spiritual reality, a compromise was needed. This compromise was formed on the spiritual and intellectual level by referring to the Incarnation of the eternal Word of God in Jesus Christ as authorization for what the painter was doing. On the material and artistic level in the broadest sense, however, the Church demanded control over "the artistic image in religious images." The artist's inspiration and intuition were constrained within narrow limits. Everything that a human being makes as something creative and unique begins first of all, to put it bluntly, as something in his head. The spiritual discipline of an inspired artist consisted of prayer before and during creation of an icon, as already mentioned above, and strictly following a text. The icon painter was not even entirely free in the one area that belongs to the most creative aspects of human artistic endeavor, namely the choice of colors. The liturgy and rites of the Eastern Church had their own color canon, which painters also had to obey. Light, the "physical principle of painting,"[1] which is a gauge of the mastery of an artist, is natural for the icon painter, a creature of God, a derivation of the uncreated light of God. Artists had to face the mild but ever-present restrictions of the Church.

Up to this point, this book has dealt with the world of icons as seen from inside that world. Now we look at them from the outside, with the eyes of a modern, non-Orthodox beholder, who may not view them with prayerful eyes. Of course, we do this with respect for the sacred images.

ABSTRACTION AND INTELLECTUAL REALITY

Understanding the abstract[2] is an intellectual activity in which the incidental, the concrete, and the individual aspects of an object or a person are removed, that is, abstracted from it, in order to recognize its core or essence. Greek and Byzantine thinkers assumed that a painter already had a primordial image in his or her head, and simply had to transfer this image to material-sensual reality. For these thinkers, aesthetics was something altogether different from our understanding of this word. The Greek word *aisthesis* means "the sensuous visualization of intellectual[3] (primordial) images in a concrete image," in the *eikon*.

These thinkers were not interested in aesthetic beauty or the mindful lingering on externals, but rather in the struggle for knowledge of the eternal values embodied in a work of art. The external, the physical, the this-worldly had only an interim character. The artist in his or her individuality, as a person, played a secondary role in this view of things; concepts such as "genius" or "originality" were unknown in antiquity or the Middle Ages. This is probably

Page 274: The Virgin Mary, Post-Byzantine, sixteenth century.
Throughout the centuries Mary has constantly been portrayed in Byzantine tradition with an oval face, a thin neck, dark-shadowed, almond-shaped eyes, a small regal nose, and a small mouth. These characteristics originate in a biography of Mary written by Epiphanius of Constantinople, who used earlier sources of John of Thessalonika and Andrew of Crete. On this sixteenth century icon, the Mother of God is characterized as the Virgin Mother of God by three stars on her maphorion. Her upright posture and the Tyrian purple cape parallel the calm majesty of her facial expression. Although her gaze is directed sideward, her eyes give her the appearance of being lost in meditation.

1 According to Hegel.
2 From the Latin *abstrahere*, "to pull away, remove."
3 Greek *noetic*.

because all areas of art were subsumed under the realm of crafts, and crafts were on the very bottom rung of social prestige. The same was true, incidentally, for secretaries who took dictation from others, while the person dictating represented the intellectual aristocracy.

The Orthodox believer sees himself as observed by the holy persons portrayed in the icons, and only in a secondary sense is he or she an active observer. Nikolai Gogol, in the short story "The Picture," an excursion into the realm of the irrational and the demonic, used the reverse of this insight to give literary structure to the fascination of a face-to-face encounter with evil. As hardly anyone before him had done, Gogol exposed the psychological mechanisms that exist between image and beholder and alternate with each other, on the basis of the theology of images. Two men of late antiquity, quite independently of each other, formulated this insight better than anyone in modern times: "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known."[4] And the philosopher Plotinus (d. 269–70 A. D.), "If one has come to the knowledge that is the highest blessedness, then one must retreat into oneself where, instead of seeing, one is the person being seen by Another, coming from above; in a way, thus is one a seer and shines in thought." We can feel the spirit of late Hellenism in both texts, the last vestige of which was expressed in the writings of iconophiles. At the same time, we turn our attention now with them to the classical category of the sublime, upon which we will linger in the section to come.

THE ICON AS ART OF THE SUBLIME

In ways completely independent of icons, it has often been contended that the sublime is not an aesthetic but rather a religious category. The great thinkers of antiquity already held this position. As the word itself indicates, the sublime is above its environment, in particular above the person standing before it. The spectrum of the relationship between the sublime and the person who perceives it ranges from respect through veneration to complete and unconditional submission. Just as the sublime personage looks over the head of the person standing in front, with a fixed gaze and in rigid frontal stance, the viewer must follow certain rules of protocol, such as taking off shoes before entering a room in which the sublime image is present, washing the hands, different forms of genuflection and the posture of adoration, and covering the hands and the head.

The sublime figures on the deësis row of the iconostasis (see page 218 *f.*) illustrate this. Simplicity and lucidity, serenity and inner strength are the essence of the sublime. "Sublimity is the resonance of the magnitude of soul," one writer of antiquity said. Lack of clarity and the complicated structure of a statue or painting of a sublime person do not inspire awe. Instead, they unnecessarily and dangerously complicate the relationship between the sublime figure and the venerating beholder. "Understandability" as the sum of all these elements is one of the main requirements icons must fulfill—just as the relationships between the holy persons depicted and the prayerful beholder

Page 276: Mary the Life-giving Spring, Italo-Cretan, eighteenth century.
This oval icon (106.5cm x 58.5cm) has been fit into an ornately carved, gilded frame. The sweeping form with flourishes and curlicues harmonizes well with the artistic elements of the icon itself. At the very top, we see the mandylion, with a Renaissance-style Annunciation underneath. The religious center of the image, the Mother of God hovering in clouds above the basin of the fountain with the child

Jesus in her lap, is also at the frame's horizontal axis, and is further emphasized by the groups of angels right and left. Water flows from the upper basin into the larger one beneath, and then into the actual basin of the fountain. The Constantinople city wall stretches horizontally across the central section. Through its gates, many kinds of people come on pilgrimage to the fountain's healing waters. In front of and around the fountain, people with a variety of illnesses, the frail, the lame, the blind, and the possessed, hope to find healing here, since the fountain is consecrated to the Mother of God, the Life-giving Spring.

The detail enlargement *(above)* shows Mary, the Queen of Heaven with the child Jesus, who has raised both hands in blessing.

4 St. Paul, in I Corinthians 13.

The deësis tier of an Iconostasis (detail), Russian, seventeenth century.
In the center, Christ sits enthroned as Sovereign of the entire universe. The rhombus behind him symbolizes his divine majesty. The mandorla signifies celestial powers, and the large square with the symbols of the Evangelists in the corners represents the earth, where the Apostles are meant to proclaim the Gospel. At the right of Christ we see Mary in the intercessory posture, and to Christ's left John the Forerunner, both of whom beseech Christ's grace for sinful humanity. After them at Mary's side are the following figures with bowed head and hands open in prayer: the Archangel Gabriel, the Apostle Peter, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and (no longer visible on this detailed section) the monk Zosima from the Solovetsy Monastery and the great martyr, Stephen. After John the Forerunner, we see the Archangel Michael, the Apostle Paul, Saint Nicholas (not visible in this detail), Saint Gregory, the monk Savaty from the Solovetsy Monastery, and the great martyr Thecla. These are all sublime figures of saints, who have found their way to the deësis tier; their petitionary posture and bowing toward Christ merge into two intercessory processions moving toward the Judge of the World.

should encompass the whole spectrum of feelings mentioned above. It is part of the paradox of icons that they simultaneously relinquish the sublimity of their holy portrayals, which reach into the highest heavens, just as God has relinquished divine sublimity in the Incarnation in Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity. This aspect may open new and, for some, unexpected perspectives on the icon as an art of the sublime.

The sublime is surprisingly vulnerable, and this vulnerability increases as it becomes more sublime, as it raises itself more and more above those who venerate it. Its most dangerous enemy is *laughter*, or rather, *ridicule*. The rage and outrage of the subservient can be tolerated by the sublime; indeed, in a sense it needs these to exist. The unconditional and ritually sanctified solemnity of the sublime cannot tolerate a probing of its essential lack of humor. These unique but essential mechanisms of the sublime were well-known in the rhetorical art of antiquity as well as by the preachers of the ancient Church and the Church of the Middle Ages and the Baroque period.

They understood that they could burden their listeners in sermons with the difficult, serious themes if they relieved them with humor. The incarnate God of Christianity is not a sublime idol with inherent vulnerabilities. Indeed, this God does not tolerate ridicule, but encourages liberating laughter, as the "Easter laughter" of the Middle Ages so clearly indicates. Of course, we must admit that great peals of laughter were never depicted on icons. Disguised inherent humor is evident, however, as on a northern Russian icon portraying Christ ascending into heaven, leaving his sandals behind on earth—a humorous, reverent realism. In heaven, the Son of God has no need for sandals!

The icons' relationships to humor's more subtle sister, *irony* (if they are

indeed sisters) have considerably more facets. Irony is seldom spontaneous like humor or laughter, but it is premeditated and shrewd. In Greek, *eironeia* means "dissimulation" or "play-acting." A person who uses irony seems to revere the sublime. How this is done, however, clearly reveals an internal reserve that encompasses a spectrum ranging from bitter sarcasm to warm-hearted teasing, but is always clearly intelligent. The most well-known variety of irony is romantic irony, which considerably transcends the category of the aesthetic alone to seek and find truth in reality, and vice versa. To express the relationship between the icon and its prayerful beholder in terms of ironic distance would be a typically Western way of seeing things, but not entirely proper. The holy persons depicted on an icon always maintain ironic distance from their beholders, in order to be helpful in the search for truth in each person's own reality. We can also find examples of irony in the content of the pictures. For example, there is an icon from Novgorod that depicts an ascetic man of letters with his head in the heights of heaven, while at his feet a small gathering of field and herd saints look up to him out of the corners of their eyes, smiling slightly. The difference in altitude here is distinctly ironic and refers to the enormous distance between two realities: the this-world reality of the farmer and the other-world reality of the ascetic.

Finally we reach the third category of the artistic image of the icon, namely the *grotesque.*[5] People of modern times are surrounded daily by the grotesque in the media of our electronic culture. The grotesque reaches from the absurd to the unimaginably horrible. The grotesque holds up a mirror to an alienated world. The dreadful visions of Bosch and Breughel get under our skin because they are not simply the vile products of an artistic imagination, but concrete

5 From the Italian *grottesco,* "grotta," subterranean grottos in the Rome of antiquity with puzzling depictions.

Гдѣ Са
Ѡбрѣтъ
Ѡбрѣтъ Ѹсѣкновеніе
главы Ст пр Іѡанна
Ст пр Іѡаннъ
Ст пр Іѡаннъ
Ст пр Анна
Ст Козма
Ст Памфилій
Ст м Ирина
Ст Домиан
Пр Евдокіа

realities. We are no longer able to laugh when confronted with a grotesque situation; laughter gets stuck in our throats. If satire and caricature still have a certain humane charm, then the grotesque often shows only the deformed face of inhumanity. The object of the grotesque par excellence in icon painting is the scene of torture. Miraculous reports can also take on grotesque forms without necessarily being designated as grotesque. After all, the ascetic life, especially of the Eastern saints, often took on grotesque forms. Biographical episodes of these saints were then made visible in the pictorial world of sacred art.

LIGHT AND THE WORLD OF COLOR

The observer of modern painting is accustomed to judging the play of light and shadows in a painting on the basis of whether or not the source of light comes from outside the picture or from within it (for example, from a candle). The painting of the Middle Ages in the East and in the West asks a different question. "There is no difference between the pictorial world portrayed and light as the source of light; they are one. Light is immanent in the world of pictures, and it shines on the beholder from the source. If it is extinguished, the pictorial world would be invisible and non-existent. The image, as light itself, beams its rays toward us, without being crossed by other sources of light emanating from the side within the depiction itself.

"Because this pictorial light has utterly no analogy to our natural daylight and world of shadows, there can be no mutual interaction between the image and ourselves, but rather only a one-sided relationship. Our eyes are not able to answer the light of the image, but can only receive it, quite literally, as light from another world. The optical fabric of light in an image, the actual 'pictorial light,' is not a function of the pictorial world, but rather they are forthwith identical."[6] These words of a contemporary critique of the painting of the Middle Ages can be applied to icon painting as well.

Here there is a paradox—the icon knows no source of light, either internally or externally; the illusion of light and shadows is kept to an absolute minimum. This is partly because the tempera technique itself is limited, but more importantly because finite space is of lesser value than infinite space. As an artistic portrayal, the icon is pure "inner space," an abstraction of real space, with mysterious powers to lure the beholder into it. Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944), whose own art was greatly influenced by icon painting, wrote at one point, "For many years I sought the possibility of letting the beholder 'take a walk' in the picture, of forcing him or her to a loss of self in a kind of fusion with the picture." Furthermore, in connection with the well-known phrase about icons being "windows to eternity," he said, "It's as though you actually walk into a street that you have previously only seen through a window."

It goes without saying that the relationship between light and color is governed by its own laws in this "inner space." In this regard, there are also analogies to modern painting. French neo-impressionists invented a concept for this phenomenon, "chromoluminarism," the goal of which was an optimal

Page 280: The Beheading of John the Forerunner, Russian, around 1750.
As if on stage, this tragic event is depicted both behind the backdrop and in front of it. Each scene runs into the next spatially and chronologically. On the roof of a house at the left, we see the saint standing in front of a small building. The rosewood fence around it

indicates that it is a prison. The foremost stage is the scene of the horrible beheading. In divine submission and with folded hands, John offers his neck to the executioner. The mutilated corpse, however, is already on the ground. On a diagonal bridge leading to the palace, a servant presents Salome with the head of John on a platter.

The detail enlargement (above), showing the realistic brutality of the beheading, suggests Western Baroque influence.

6 Wolfgang Schöne.

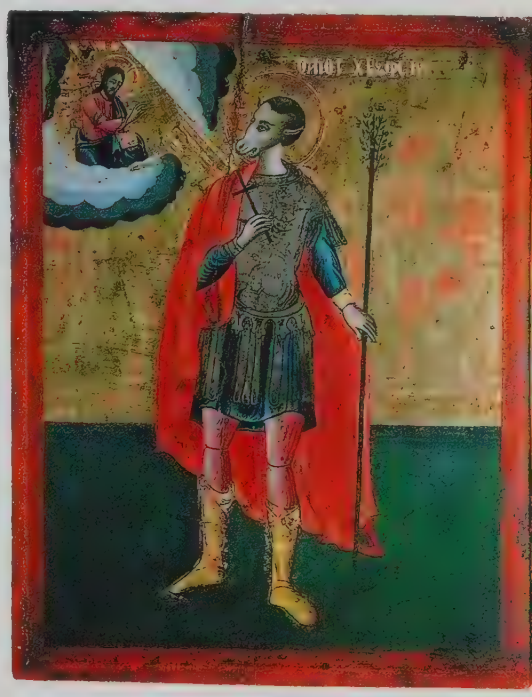
illusion of light and color on a two dimensional surface. They discovered that the art of painting involves a hopeless battle with nature, because art will never have as much light at its disposal as nature. Paul Cezanne's (1839–1906) words, "Light in nature does not exist for the painter," correspond quite surprisingly to icon painting, although the two are grounded in very different presuppositions.

A case in point for the relationship between light and color can be seen with the use of gold (see page 241 *f*). When gold is the background, it ruthlessly changes all inner-pictorial relationships. Gold acts as a depressant for every form of space illusion. It allows space to shrink to a small strip. The brilliance of a gold background radiates more powerfully than any other color. It is "its own light in the highest potency."[7] If you look at a pure gold background for a period of time, other colors disappear. This experience is what a sixth-century Church Father called "superluminescent" darkness, that is, the blackout of all objects, including the world of color.

Tempera technique restricts another optical effect to which we are accustomed in modern painting, but does offer analogies to it: the "soft transitions" from one color to another. Actually, every color stands out sharply against its neighbor. Compared to "colorism," this coloring is called "polychromy." In contrast to the natural coloring of things, polychromy, according to Schmarsow, "is a matter that proceeds from the subject, that is, in its essence an arbitrary selection of the colors at one's disposal." For this reason, polychromy is the ideal approach to advertising posters; they should directly influence the beholder without challenging him or her to critical evaluation. The main requirements of polychromy are clarity of arrangement and lucidity. The comparison of icons with posters may meet with some resistance, but, from the point of view of the psychology of colors, it is perfectly justified, particularly when we approach icons as works of art.

We submerse ourselves in an altogether different world of colors when they have been created according to rules of colorism. The main characteristics of colorism are mixing colors and eliminating sharp contrasts in coloring. The eye remains focused, however, on the "sovereignty" of each single color. If we can compare polychromy with the classical, word-centered vocal music of Byzantine-Slav Orthodoxy, then we might compare colorism to the symphony. Colorism is indeed a *symphony* of colors. For both types of coloration, polychromy as well as colorism, we might well take to heart another quote from Kandinsky, "The world makes sound. It is a cosmos of metaphysical beings. And so, dead matter is really living spirit." As the aesthetic appeal of polychromy is found in the specific meaning of the single colors—the autosemantic—so colorism's appeal lies in its superimposed structure, to which it freely subjects itself, the synsemantic. Colorism is much more suitable than polychromy for expressing religious emotions artistically. For this reason it is understandable that the former can be found with a correspondingly expressive style in the critical, transitional era of wall painting and icon painting. During this time there was also a transition from egg tempera to oil painting, since the latter is essentially more akin to colorism than the tempera technique. In conclusion: With colorism duplicating the natural wealth of colors, the illusion of light and shadow can be given its due again. Later icons, in

Page 282: The Archangel Gabriel, Russian, twelfth century.
This beautiful head and shoulder portrait of Gabriel was nicknamed Angel with the Golden Hair because of the golden streaks in his hair. Fortunately, this icon is the extant part of a deësis group. The angel's face expresses celestial dignity and depth of humanity equally. The expression of restrained melancholy in the mild gaze of the large eyes is fascinating.



Above: Saint Christopher, Greek, eighteenth century.
Many legends surround the figure of Saint Christopher. When still a heathen, he is said to have carried the child Jesus across the rapids of a river on his shoulder, supporting himself with a long staff. Afterwards, when his staff started to blossom, he was baptized. Later, he died as a martyr. It is said that he was born in the third century in the land of the cannibals, or in the land of the dog-headed. A tale from Cyprus relates that he, a particularly handsome man, asked God to give him the head of a dog so as not to tempt the girls in the village. This story was especially popular in Russia, and Christopher is often depicted on Russian icons with the head of a dog.

7 *Ibid.*

Above: Four Saintly Founders of Monasteries with Seraph and Christ in Benediction, School of Novgorod, around 1600.
On this unusual deësis depiction, in which the monastic founding fathers are wearing monk's robes, Makary of Zheltye Vody, Alexander of Oshevensk, Sergei of Radonezh, and Cyril of Beloozero turn to Christ, who hovers above a seraph. In the intercessory posture, they recommend their monasteries to him. This is the work of a master, who clearly separated the celestial realm from the figures of the monks in color and movement and, at the same time, drew them both together in harmony.

Page 285: Christ's Descent into Hell, Russian, second quarter of the fifteenth century.
The resurrected Lord stands over the abyss of darkness, with light breaking through from above behind him. The lock is still visible on one of the broken doors to the underworld. Christ pulls Adam, who entreats him from below and is the last person to be rescued, with a firm grip into the light of grace. This anastasis is a traditional depiction, but the internal animation of the scene and the light illuminating the scene in essence indicate knowledge of Western stylistic elements.

particular those with architectural or natural backdrops, demonstrate this clearly and impressively, especially when it is evident that the icon painters wanted to emancipate themselves from the dictatorship of tempera art without abandoning it altogether. This religious art exists in a whole series of monuments, in which we can see the dramatic struggle between a liturgically oriented canon of colors and a natural canon of colors, just as the "old style" Julian Calendar and the "new style" Gregorian Calendar were used side by side under Peter the Great and those who followed him.

LINE AND COLOR

Lines and drawing are older than painting. Even today children and advanced art students alike learn first to draw lines. The Greeks knew only one word for "writing," "drawing," and "painting," *graphe*, from which we derive our own concept of "graphic" art. The Greeks waxed ecstatic in philosophical speculation about the line. The line partitions a form or "pattern" out of *apeiron*, formlessness, and makes it existent, essential. If color has an effect on sensual perception and aesthetic pleasure, then the line has a similar effect on our understanding. We note with interest that it is easy to define a line or a drawing in a few short words, but difficult to describe a color. In this sense the linear, graphic element differs from the painting element; preserving the

Color scheme of the Icon of Saint John Climacus with George and Vlasy.
Outlines of three figures and their garments are seen in this sketch, as well as the colors to be used. The background is three-quarters red. The lower quarter, symbolizing the earth, is green. The saint in the center has white hair, a light brown sticharon, a black epitrachelion, and a dark brown phelonion. White with brown and white with blue are colors intended for the lesser saints. To intensify the pictorial expression through the clarity of color, there are no mixed colors at all.

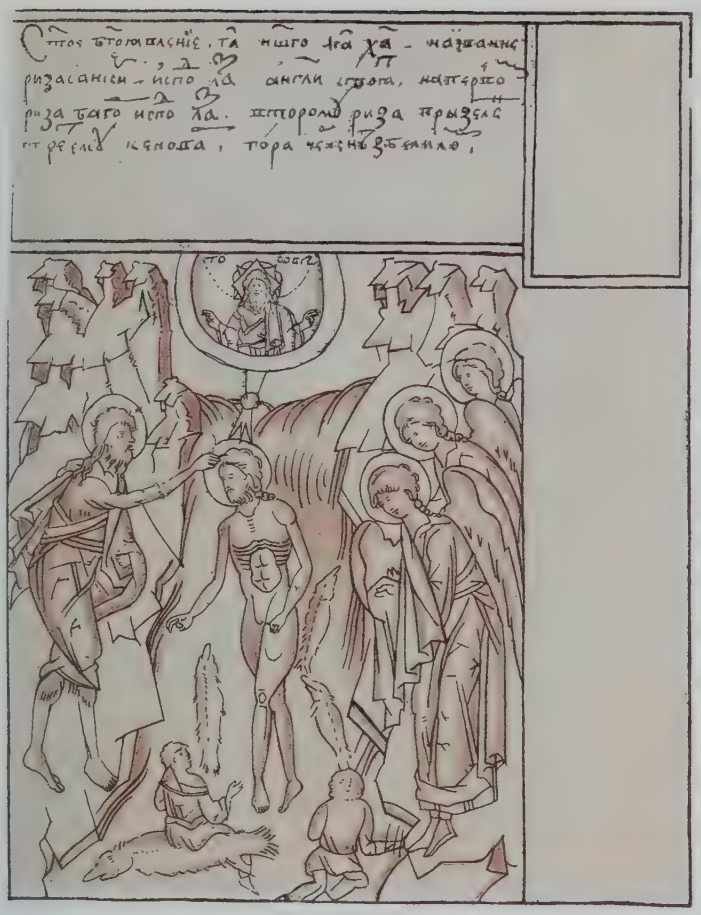
Page 287, below left: The Memorial Day of Saint Eusignius on the fifth of August and the feast of the Transfiguration on the sixth of August have been combined in one frame, but through the "supra-titles" above them, remain separate. The scene of the Transfiguration is reduced to its essentials. Christ in the aureole is flanked by Moses and Elijah, who stand on peaks of Mount Tabor, while the Apostles Peter, John, and James are thrown to the ground, blinded by the light.

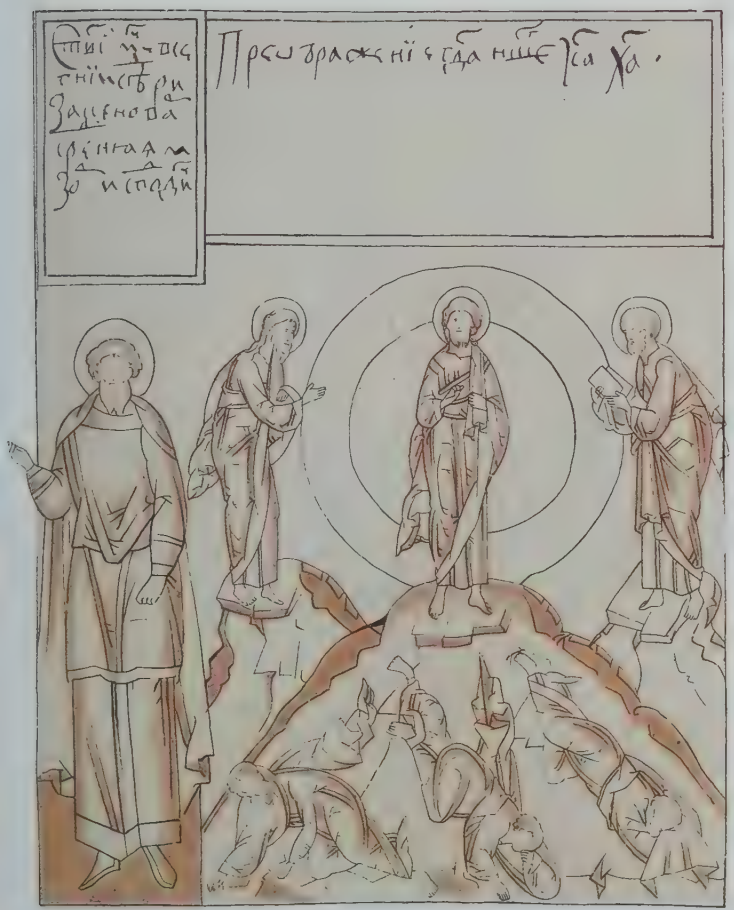
equilibrium between the two is one of the most important tasks of the artist. Remember that painting an icon also means creating a visual text. In Byzantine Greek understanding, the icon is a *graphe* distinct from its theological and philosophical guidelines.

The outline drawing is the first step in producing an icon. The success of this drawing will determine almost everything else that follows. The outline drawing should not be confused with the graphic draft of a scene for a painting. Since the Iconoclastic Controversy, it is a canonical prerequisite for the pictorial plan, its exclusion from non-being. Everyone has experienced this. For in the very moment that we draw a line on a piece of paper, we have formed a being out of non-being, we have created something. The same thing happens when the icon painter makes his outline drawing on the surface to be painted. Within the outline drawing, an internal, independent, sovereign system has come into being, the free play of whose lines depends on the persons, their garments, and other objects.

The relationship between line, drawing, and color has not always been harmonious, for the line is older than color. As Othon Friesz (1879–1949) wrote, "Color ceased to be the mistress of the canvas. Drawing was born again and the volume. Color has remained *adjuvant savoureux*." Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) answered the question about the relationship between line and color as follows, "This question, perhaps the root of all figurative painting, depends on modeling the sketch directly with the brush." There can be no doubt that for icon painting the emotive, emotional element of color is subordinated to the cerebral, cognitive element of line. In other words, it was the icon painter's task to overcome the age-old rivalry between line and color and to bring them together in harmony. One of the most impressive examples of meeting this challenge successfully is Andrei Rublev's "Trinity" (page 143). The color symbolism is harmonized with the clever and symbolic-geometric system of lines as circle, triangle, square, and octagon. In this singular portrayal, the primeval rivalry between line and color in an artistic work was overcome. Though he did not know anything about Rublev, Adolf Hoelzel (1853–1934) described his work and achievement as follows, "The first artistic act takes place in the conception of the three-dimensional form of an object as a form on a surface and the transferring of this conception, rhythmically, onto the surface and its bordering lines."

Trying to understand the icon as a work of art is the endeavor, not entirely free of risk, to understand using modern ideas and concepts an art with roots reaching to antiquity. In this endeavor, it is not simply a matter of making the past present. For millions of Orthodox Christians, this historical approach to viewing and analyzing is of secondary significance, since the icon for them is a personal companion from the cradle to the grave in a way that cannot be compared to the Western meditative icon. This final chapter has simply been an attempt to illustrate that the mindset of the West, coming as it does not from a foreign but *different* cultural milieu than that of the East, can contribute to an understanding of icon painting.





These three scenic drawings are the patterns for *menologia* (monthly calendars) with the feast days of the saints. The saints, whose memorial is celebrated in the liturgy from the first to the last day of the month, are depicted next to each other in several rows.

Above left: In contrast to the liturgy of the West, it is not the arrival of the three Wise Men that is celebrated on the sixth of January (the day of the Epiphany); rather it is the Baptism of Jesus which is commemorated, because there, for the first time, the divinity of Christ was publicly revealed in the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Above: Saint Tryphon is celebrated on the first of February, and the second of February is the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. While Tryphon stands facing forward gazing at the beholder, the scene next to him takes place within a backdrop. The old man, Simeon, takes the baby Jesus from Mary's hands and holds him reverently. Behind Joseph, who has brought two doves as a sacrifice, we see the Prophetess Anna.

Above: Saint Basil the Great, Novgorod, 15th C.
As one of the four great Church Fathers of the Eastern Church and creator of the liturgy named after him, we see Basil the Great, characterized by a long, pointed beard; he is often found on the deësis tier of an iconostasis.

Page 289: The Mother of God Hodegetria from Martvili, Georgian goldsmith's art, 10th C.
The central 32cm x 23cm panel is made of pure gold. The frame is embellished with medallions, and the vine ornamentation is made of gilded silver. In the center of the gold plate, encircled by gems, we see the most precious jewel, the sublime figure of Mary with the only-begotten Son of God on her arm. The figure of the Mother of God gesturing toward the child Jesus with her right hand, is similar in posture to the prototypical Hodegetria, but her facial expression is more softly feminine and the folds of her garment more animated. Background and arch are richly embellished with gems and pearl flowers in veneration of the Mother of God with the child.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introductory Works

Beck, H.-G., "Von der Fragwürdigkeit der Ikone," [Concerning the Dubious Nature of the Icon], *Sitzungsbereichte der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse* [Reports of the Procedures of the Bavarian Academy of the Sciences, Philological-Historical Section], Issue 7, Munich, 1975.

Bychkov, V. V., *Vizantyskaya Estetika* [Byzantine Aesthetics], Moscow, 1977.

de Caluwé, R., *Ikonenmalerei* [Icon Painting], Rosenheim, 1984.

Eikon und Logos, Beiträge zur Erforschung byzantinischer Kulturtradtionen, Konrad Onasch zur Vollendung seines 65. Geburtstags [Eikon and Logos, Research Articles on Byzantine Cultural Traditions, dedicated to Konrad Onasch on the occasion of his sixty-fifth Birthday], H. Glotz (ed.), Halle a.d. Saale, 1981.

Evdokimov, E., "Obratnaya Perspektiva" [Inverted Perspective], *Trudy po znakovim sistemam* 3, Tartu, 1967, 381–416.

———, "Ikonostas," [The Iconostasis], *Bogoslovskie Trudy* 9, Moscow, 1972, 82–148.

———, and Florensky, P., *L'Art de l'Icône. Théologie de la Beauté,* Paris, 1970.

Galavaris, G., *The Icon in the Life of the Church. Doctrine, Liturgy, Devotion,* Leiden, 1981.

Gerhard, H.P., *Welt der Ikonen* [The World of Icons], Recklinghausen 7, 1980.

Grenberg, J. and I., *Technologia stankovoi zhivopisi: Istoriya i issledovaniya* [Technology of Panel Painting: History and Research], Moscow, 1982.

Heuser, A., *Ikonenmalerei heute* [Icon Painting Today], Recklinghausen, 1988.

Mathew, G., *Byzantine Aesthetics,* London, 1963.

Nyssen, W., *Das Zeugnis des Bildes im frühen Byzanz* [The Witness of the Image in Early Byzantium], Freiburg, 1962.

———, *Drei Säulen tragen die Kuppel* [Three Pillars Support the Dome], Jerusalem, Rome and Cologne, 1989.

———, "Die Ikone und die Identität der slavisch-orthodoxen Völker," [The Icon and the Identity of the Orthodox Slavic Peoples], *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 37 (1992), 139–151.

———, Zur Architekturkulisse der altrussischen Ikone [Concerning the Architectural Backdrops of Old Russian Icons], *Tausend Jahre Taufe Rußlands.* [Articles from an International and Ecumenical Symposium in Halle], *April 13–16, 1988,* H. Glotz, (ed.), Leipzig, 1993, 383–400.

———, "Der Bildkode 'Höhle' in der altrussischen Ikonographie" [Pictorial Code of the "Cave" in Old Russian Iconography], *Zeitschrift für Slavistik* 39 (1994), 51–65.

Onasch, K., "Identity Models of Old Russian Sacred Art," Medieval Russian Culture, H. Birnbaum and M.S. Flier, (eds.), Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1984, 175–205.

———, "Einige soziologische Aspekte der Ikonenmalerei" [Some Sociological Aspects of Icon Painting], *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 93, Leipzig, 1968, 321–332.

———, "Recht und Grenzen einer Ikonensemiotik" [Rights and Limits of a Semiotic of Icons], *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 111, Leipzig, 1986, 241–258.

———, "Die Weltanschauung der altrussischen Ikone" [World View of the Old Russian Icon], *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 33, Berlin, 1988, Vol. 6, 797–805.

Ouspensky, L., *La Théologie de l'Icône dans l'Eglise Orthodoxe,* Paris, 1980.

———, and Lossky, W., *The Meaning of Icons,* Crestwood, N.Y., 1989.

Raushenbach, B.V., *Sistemy perspektivy v izobrazitel'nom iskusstve (obshchaya teoriya perspektivy)* [Systems of Perspective in the Performing Arts: General Theory of Perspective], Moscow, 1986.

Rothemund, B., *Handbuch der Ikonenkunst* [Manual of Icon Art], Munich, 1985.

Schönborn, C., *Die Christus-Ikone. Eine theologische Einführung* [The Icon of Christ, A Theological Introduction], Schaffhausen, 1984.

Schulz, H.-J., "Die byzantinische Liturgie, Glaubenszeugnis und Symbolgehalt" [The Byzantine Liturgy, Witness of Faith and Symbolic Content], *Trier* 2, 1980.

Sendler, E., *L'Icône. Image de l'Invisible,* Paris, 1981.

Shegin, L.F., *Die Sprache des Bildes, Form und Konvention in der alten Kunst* [The Language of Pictures, Form, and Convention in Ancient Art], with a Foreword by B.A. Uspenski, translated by Klaus Städtke, Dresden, 1982.

Skrobucha, H., (ed.), *Die Ikonenmalerei, Technik und Vorzeichnung* [Icon Painting, Technique and Preliminary Sketches], rendered from a Russian manuscript by Ivan Schneider and Peter Fedorov, Recklinghausen, 1978.

Szolc (Scholz), P., "Das ikonische Zeichen als Ausdruck der göttlichen Realität in einer religiösen Gemeinschaft" [Iconographic Sign as Expression of Divine Reality within a Religious Community], *Linguistica Biblica* 51, June 1982, 37–76.

Thon, N., *Ikone und Liturgie* [Icon and Liturgy], Trier, 1979.

Torp, H., *The Integrating System of Proportion in the Byzantine Art, An Essay on the Method of the Painters of Holy Images,* Rome, 1984.

Uspensky, B.A., "Zur Semiotik der Ikone" [Concerning the Semiotics of Icons], *Semiotica Sovietica* 2, Soviet Research of the Moscow and Tartu Schools on Secondary Model-forming Sign-Systems (1952–1973), Aachen, 1986, 755–825.

Uspensky, B., *The Semiotics of the Russian Icon,* Lisse 1976.

Walter, C., *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church,* London, 1982.

Dictionaries

Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie [Lexicon of Christian Iconography], Volumes 1–8, Rome-Freiburg-Basel-Vienna, 1968–1976.

Lexikon der Kunst, Architektur, Bildende Kunst, Angewandte Kunst, Industrieformgestaltung, Kunsttheorie [Lexicon of Art, Architecture, Fine Arts, Applied Art, Industrial Design, Artistic Theory], Volume 1, Leipzig 1987, older edition in volumes 1–5, Leipzig, 1968–1978.

Lexikon des Mittelalters [Lexicon of the Middle Ages], Volumes 1–3, Munich and Zurich, 1980–1983.

Onasch, K., Lexikon Liturgie und Kunst der Ostkirche unter Berücksichtigung der Alten Kirche [Lexicon of the Liturgy

and Art of the Eastern Church as it Relates to the Primitive Church], Berlin and Munich, 1993.

Reallexikon der Byzantischen Kunst [Lexicon of Byzantine Art], Volumes 1–3, Stuttgart, 1966–1968.

Presentations

Alpatov, M.V., (ed.), *Andrei Rublev i ego Epocha* [Andrei Rublev and His Epoch], Sbornik statei.

———, *Feofan Grek/ Theophanes the Greek,* Moscow, 1984.

Bentchev, I., *Handbuch der Gottesmutterikonen Rußlands, Gnadenbilder, Legenden, Darstellungen* [Manual of Russian Icons of the Mother of God, Miraculous Icons, Legends, and Depictions], Bonn, 1985.

Boshkov, A., *Die bulgarische Malerei* [Bulgarian Painting], Recklinghausen, 1979.

Bryusova, V.G., *Russkaya Zhivopis 17. Veka* [Russian Painting of the Seventeenth Century], Moscow 1984.

Dancu, J., and Dancu, D., *Die bäuerliche Hinterglasmalerei in Rumänien* [Peasant Behind-Glass Painting in Romania], Berlin, 1980.

Danilova, I.J., *Dioissi* [Dionysius], Dresden, 1970.

Donnert, E., *Altrussisches Kulturlexikon* [Old Russian Cultural Lexicon], Leipzig, 1985.

———, *Das Moskauer Rußland, Kultur und Geistesleben im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* [The Russia of Moscow: Culture and Intellectual Life in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries], Leipzig, 1976.

———, *Das Kiewer Rußland, Kultur und Geistesleben vom 9. bis zum beginnenden 13. Jahrhundert* [Kievan Russia: Culture and Intellectual Life from the Ninth to the Beginning of the Thirteenth Centuries], Jena and Berlin, 1983.

Felicetti-Liebenfels, W., *Geschichte der byzantinischen Ikonenmalerei von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ausklange unter Berücksichtigung der Maniera Greca und der Italo-Byzantinischen Schule* [History of Byzantine Icon Painting from Its Inception to Its Demise with Particular Attention Paid to the Maniera Greca and the Italo-Byzantine School], Olten-Lausanne, 1956.

———, *Geschichte der russischen Ikonmalerei in den Grundzügen dargestellt* [An Outline History of Russian Icon Painting], Graz, 1972.

Grabar, I.E., Lasarev, W.N., and Kemenov, W.S., (eds.), *Geschichte der russischen Kunst* [History of Russian Art], Volumes 1–5, Dresden, 1957–1970.

Die Ikonen [Icons], Collaborative Research by Kurt Weitzmann, Galané Alibegashvili, Aneli Volskaya, Gordana Babic, Manolis Chatzidakis, Mihail Alpatov, Teodora Voinescu, Wilhelm Nyssen, Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1982.

Ivanov, V., *Das Große Buch der russischen Ikonen* [The Great Book of Russian Icons], Published by the Patriarchate of Moscow with a Foreword by Metropolitan Pitirim, Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1988.

Jeckel, S., "Russische Metal-Ikonen—in Formsand gegossener Glaube" [Russian Metallic Icons: Faith Molded in Foundry Sand], *Bramsche* 2, 1981.

Lange, R., *Die Byzantinische Reliefikone* [The Byzantine Relief Icon], Recklinghausen, 1964.

Lazarev, V.N., *Russkaya Ikonopis ot Istokov do Nachala. XVI Veka* [Russian Icon Painting from its Beginnings to the Sixteenth Century], Moscow, 1983.

———, *Stranitsy Istory Novgorodskoi Zhivopisi, Dvustoronnie Tabletki iz Sobora Sv. Sofii v Novgorode* [Pages of the History of Novgorodian Painting: The Double-Sided Tablets from the St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod], Moscow, second edition, 1983.

———, *Theophanes und seine Schule* [Theophanes and His School], Dresden, 1968.

———, *Andrei Rublev i ego shkola* [Andrei Rublev and His School], Moscow, 1966.

———, *Ikonen der Moskauer Schule* [Icons of the Moscow School], Berlin, 1977.

———, Novgorodskaya Ikonopis [Novgorodian Icon-Painting], Moscow, 1969.

Lebedova, J.A., *Andrey Rubljow und seine Zeitgenossen* [Andrei Rublev and his Contemporaries], Dresden, 1962.

Lichatshov, D.S., Laurina, V.K., and Pushkaryov, W.A., *Nowgoroder Ikonen des 12. bis 17. Jahrhunderts* [The Icons of Novgorod from the Twelfth to the Seventeenth Centuries], Leningrad, 1983.

Maslenizyn, S., *Ikonen der Schule aus Jaroslawl* [Icons of the School of Yaroslavl], Berlin, 1980.

McKenzie, A.D., *Mystical Mirrors, Russian Icons in the Maryhill Museum of Art,* Goldendale, WA, 1986.

Müller, L., *Die Dreifaltigkeitsikone des Andrej Rubljow* [Icon of the Trinity by Andrei Rublev], Munich, 1990.

Nicolescu, C., *Rumänische Ikonen* [Romanian Icons], Berlin, 1973.

Onasch, K., *Ikonen* [Icons], Berlin, 1977 (Gütersloh, 1963; London, 1963; Geneva, 1963, in addition to licensed editions in the USA and Yugoslavia).

———, *Altrussische Ikonen* [Old Russian Icons], Berlin, 1977 (Gütersloh, 1977; Zurich, 1978; Paris, 1977; London/New York, 1978).

Popova, O.S., *Iskusstvo Novgoroda i Moskvy pervoy poloviny chetyrnadtsatogo veka, Ego svyazy a Vizantiey* [The Art of Novgorod and Moscow in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century: Its Relationship to Byzantium], Moscow, 1980.

Sendler, E., *Les icônes byzantines de la Mère de Dieu,* Paris, 1992

Skrobucha, H., *Ikonen der Tschechoslowakei* [The Icons of Czechoslovakia], Prague, 1971.

———, *Meisterwerke der Ikonenmalerei* [Masterpieces of Icon Painting], Recklinghausen, 1961.

Smirnova, E.S., *Moskovskaya Ikona XIV–XVII vekov* [Icons of Moscow from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century], Leningrad, 1988.

Stichel, R., *Die Geburt Christi in der russischen Ikonenmalerei, Voraussetzungen im Glauben und Kunst des Christlichen Ostens und Westens* [The Nativity of Christ in Russian Icon Painting: Presuppositions in the Faith and Art of the Christian East and West], Stuttgart, 1990.

Tschilingirov, A., *Die Kunst des Christlichen Mittelalters in Bulgarien, 4. bis 18. Jahrhundert* [The Art of the Christian Middle Ages in Bulgaria From the Fourth to the

Eighteenth Century].

Vagner, G.K., *Kanon i stil v drevnerusskom iskusstve* [Canon and Style in Old Russian Art], Moscow, 1987.

———, *Probleme Zhanrov v Drevnerusskom iskusstve* [The Problem of Genre in Old Russian Art], Moscow, 1974.

Volbach, W.F., *Lafontaine-Dosogne, Byzantium und der christliche Osten* [Lafontaine-Dosogne and the Christian East], Berlin (West), 1968.

Vzdornov, G.I., *Troitsa Andreya Rubleva, Antologiya* [The Trinity of Andrei Rublev: An Anthology], Moscow, 1981.

———, *Feofan Grek, Tvorcheskoe nasledie* [Theophanes the Greek: The Creative Heritage], Moscow, 1983.

Weitzmann, K., *The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, The Icons, Volume One: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century,* Princeton, N.J., 1976.

———, G. Alibegashvili, A. Volskaya, G. Babic, M. Chartzidakis, M. Alpatov, T. Voinescu, and W. Nyssen, *Die Ikonen* [The Icon], Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1982.

———, M. Chartzidakis, K. Miatev and Radojcic, *Frühe Ikonen, Sinai, Griechenland, Bulgarien, Jugoslawien* [Early Icons: Sinai, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia].

Wendt, C.H., *Rumänische Ikonenmalerei* [Romanian Icon Painting], Eisenach, 1953.

Wessel, K., *Byzantinische Emailkunst vom 5. bis 13. Jahrhundert* [Byzantine Enamel Art from the Fifth to the Thirteenth Century], Recklinghausen, 1967.

Catalogues and Other Resources

The following is a small but qualitatively serious selection we have compiled with Bornheim, Brenske, Sommer, and Wessel-Brenske from the vast numbers of commercial catalogues in the West, which have appeared in conjunction with the increasing commercialization of icons (see Onasch, K, . "Recht und Grenzen einer Ikonensemiotik"). The titles in both of the series *Ikonen* and *Iconographia Ecclesia Orientalis* have been published in newer editions, not all of which are known to me.

Bornheim, B., *Ikonen,* Munich, 1985.

Brenske, H. (ed.), *Ikonen,* Freiburg, 1984.

Dinova-Ruseva, V., *Bulgarische Ikonen* [Bulgarian Icons], Recklinghausen, 1985.

Haustein, E., and Schröder, A., *Ikonen-Museum Recklinghausen* [The Recklinghausen Icon Museum].

Joksch, T., *Ikonen aus einer Berliner Privatsammlung* [Icons from a Private Collection], Berlin, 1978, State Museums of Berlin.

Roozemond-van Ginhoven, H.J., *Ikon, Inspired Art, Icons from "De Wijenburgh,"* De Wijenburg-Echelt.

Skrobucha, H., *Ikonen-Museum Recklinghausen* [The Recklinghausen Icon Museum], Recklinghausen, sixth edition, 1981.

Sommer, K., Ikonen, *Ein Handbuch für Sammler und Liebhaber* [Icons: A Manual for Collectors and Enthusiasts], Munich, 1979.

1000 Jahre Russische Kunst, Zur Erinnerung an die Taufe der Rus im Jahr 988 [One Thousand Years of Russian Art: a Memorial of the Baptism of Rus in the Year 988], Schloß Gottorf and Moscow, 1988.

Ullrich, F. (ed.), H. Haustein, and K.C. Felmy, 1000 Jahre Orthodoxe Kirche in der Rus 988–1988 [The Millenium of the Orthodox Church of Rus 988–1988], Recklinghausen, 1988.

Wessel, K. and Brenske, H., *Ikonen* [Icons], Munich, 1980.

Winkler, M. (ed.), *Ikonen* [Icons].

In this series the following titles have appeared:

Gerhard, H.P. *Muttergottes* [The Mother of God], Recklinghausen, 1956.

Winkler, M., *Festtage* [Feast Days], 1956.

Fabricius, U., *Jesus Christus,* 1957.

Tschizevsky, D., *Der heilige Nickolaus* [Saint Nicholas], 1957.

Biedermann, H., *Die Passion* [The Passion], 1958.

Loeschke, W., *Apostel und Evangelisten* [Apostles and Evangelists], 1958.

Eckhardt, T., *Engel und Propheten* [Angels and Prophets], 1959.

Winkler, M., Heilige und Heiligenleben 1959

Skrobucha, H. (ed.), *Iconographia Ecclesiae Orientalis.*

The following titles have appeared in this series:

Tatic-Djuric, M., *Das Bild der Engel* [The Image of the Angel], 1962.

Milosevic, D., *Das Jüngste Gericht* [The Last Judgment], 1963.

Ristov, G., *Die Geburt Christ* [The Nativity of Christ], 1963.

Wessel, K., *Abendmahl und Apostelkommunion* [The Last Supper and Communion of the Apostles], 1964.

Ristov, G., *Die Taufe Christi* [The Baptism of Christ], 1965.

Skrobucha, H., *Kosmas und Damian* [Cosmas and Damian], 1965.

Wessel, K., *Die Kreuzigung* [The Crucifixion], 1966.

Lange, R., *Die Auferstehung* [The Resurrection], 1966.

Skrobucha, H., *Maria, Russische Gnadenbilder* [Miraculous Russian Icons of Mary], 1967.

Melosevic, D., *Die Heiligen Serbiens* [The Saints of Serbia], 1968.

Lange, R., *Das Marienbild der Frühen Jahrhunderte* [The Image of Mary in the Early Centuries], Recklinghausen, 1969.

Bleyl, R. and Thon, N. (eds.), *Zeitschrift für Ostkirchliche Kunst* [Journal for the Art of the Eastern Church], Hermeneia, Dortmund (appears quarterly).

HYMN TEXTS

The following publications have been quoted with the kind permission of the publishers:

The Divine Liturgy according to St. John Chrysostom with appendices (Second Edition), St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, PA 18459.

The Festal Menaion, Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, trans., London, Faber and Faber, 1969.

The Lenten Triodion, Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, trans., London, Faber and Faber, 1977.

The following publications have been quoted with the kind permission of the Orthodox Church in America (Orthodox Christian Publications Center), P.O Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791:

Great and Holy Saturday, Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, (reprinted 1986).

Holy Friday Matins with the Passion Gospels and Royal Hours, 1988.

Matins of Holy Saturday with the Praises and Psalm 119, 1982.

The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week, n. d.

The Feast of Palms, The Services of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, 1981.

The Paschal Service, (reprinted 1986).

Albertina, Graphische Sammlung (Graphic Collection), Vienna:
144 r a

Amberg, Georg, Kölliken
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 2, 5, 40 l, r, 80 r, 104 r, 105 r, 107 l, 108 r, 109 l, 118 l, 120, 125 r, 130 r, 133, 140, 142 r, 163 l, 166 l, 173 l, r, 175 l, 176 r, 196 l, 207, 215, 256, 288
Photo Buch Kunstverlag, Ettal: 190 l, 205, 283

Andrei Rublev Museum, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 4 b, 125 l, 164 (1), 165 (5), 206, 257 a

Archeological Museum, Istanbul: 40 r

Archeological Museum, Sofia: 248 l

Archiv für Kunst und Geschichte (Archives for Art and History), Berlin:
58 l, 62 a, l, m, r, 63, a, b, l, r, 68 l, r, 112 l, a, l, b, 127 l, 132, 142 m, 143 r, 145 r, 149 l, 161 r, 165 (10), 175 r, 180 l, 184 l, r, 185 l, r, 187, 189, 191 r, 199 a, 200, 202 r, 213, 219, 228 b

Arsenal, Kremlin, Moscow
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 245 r

Art History Museum, Pskov
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 106 r

Art History Museum, Vienna: 153

Art Museum, Bucharest: 60 r, 108 l

Art Museum, Novgorod
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 205 r, 239
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 198 r

Aurora Publishers, Saint Petersburg: 79 a, r, b, l, 80 l, 84, 86 r, 87 l, 88/89, 97, 146, 147, 151 r, 158 l, 162 l, 165 (11), 172 r, 188, 203 r, 208

Autenried, Ikonenmuseum, Ichenhausen: 65 b r, 66 r, 115 l, 170 a r, 178

B & U International Picture Service, Amsterdam: 70 l, r, 139 r

Bayrisches Nationalmuseum (Bavarian National Museum), Munich: 231

Benaki Museum, Athens: 64, 143 a, 144 m

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican: 202 l, 242 r

Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris: 26, 36, 45

Böhm, Erwin, Mainz: 49, 121 l, 169 l

Böhm, Osvaldo, Venice: 158 r

Brenske, Helmut, Hanover: 144 b r, 176 l

British Library, London: 13 r, 16 l, r

British Museum, London: 13 r, 16 l, r

Brothers Jutta, Braunschweig: 227

Byzantine Museum, Athens: 102, 156 l

Capella Arcivescovile, Ravenna
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 25 l

Catacombe S. Callisto, Rome
Photo Scala, Florence: 15 l m

Cathedral of the Annunciation, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 7, 48, 106 l, 110, 141, 225

Ciobanu Collection, Bucharest, 60 l

Cruciform Reliquary, Limburg a.d. Lahn
Photo Hirmer, Munich: 47

Decani Monastery, Serbia: 145 l

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington: 39

Eikon, Münster: 137 a

EMB Archives, Lucerne: 20, 21 r a, 22 l, r, 24 a, 26 l, 27 l, m, r, 50, 137 l, 179, 229 r, 254 r, 266, 267 r a, 273

Fabbrica di San Pietro, Vatican: 13 l, 252, 247 l

Faras, Nubia
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 25 r

Ferapont Monastery, Kirillov
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 96 r

Forman Werner Archives, London: 10 r, 121 r

Georgian State Museum, Tiflis: 43, 69 l, 109 r

Getty Museum, Santa Monica, California: 240

Gübelin, Eduard, Lucerne
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 74, 75, 103, 104 l, 107 r, 148 r, 149 r, 150 r, 152, 174 l, 217 r a

Hann, G. R. Collection, Pittsburg: 77 r, 111 b

Held, Ursula, Ecublens: 17 r, 24 b, 51 l, 58 r, 59 r, 113 r, 128 r, 129, 157 l, 167 r, 186, 190 r, 191 l, 192 l, r, 193 l, r, 195, 203 l, 289

Heuser, Angela, Bonn: 116 l

Historical Museum of Architecture, Novgorod: 182
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 117 r, 163 r, 214

Historical Museum, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 199 b

Hodegon Centre for East-Christian Art, Den Haag: 8 28

Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Monastery
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 111 l a

Huber, Paul, Bolligen-Bern: 29 l, r, 52 r, 53 r, 174 r, 183

Icon Museum, Recklinghausen: 23, 25 r, a, 80 m, 92, 93 l, 113 l, 130 l, 134 l b, 135 r, 136 l, 139 l, 159 r, 164 l, 168 r, 170 l,171 l a, r, 177 r, 197 l, 201, 232, 244 r, 253

Istituto Suore Benedettine di Priscilla, Rome: 12, 14, 15 a, m, m, r, a

Jasna Góra, Poland: Czestochova: 161 l

Kolomenskoi Museum, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 96 l

Kremlin, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 6, 86 l, 87 r, 100, 122 r, 123 r, 131, 136, 157 r, 166 r, 169 r

La Pomme d'Or, Geneva: 61 l

Matysova Wooden Church, Czech Republic: 67 a

Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 25 m

Ministry of Culture, Ostia: 247 r

Musée Unterlinden, Colmar, France
Photo O. Zimmermann, Colmar: 267 b

Museo Civico Cristiano, Brescia: 11 r

Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence: 11 m

Museum for Western and Eastern Art, Kiev: 238

Museum of Natural History, Vienna: 22 m

National Gallery, London: 116 r

National Gallery, Sofia: 53 l, 54, 55

National Museum, Belgrade: 57, 59 l

National Museum, Ochrid: 138 r, 52 l

Onasch, Konrad, Halle: 76 a From Podlinnik: 236, 237, 287
From Icon Painting: 234, 263, 264, 273

Panorama Publishers, Moscow: 99, 258, 259

Photo Scala, Florence: 37 a, 37 b, 142 l

Picture Gallery of the Area of Tver
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 81

Prayerhouse of the Old Believers, Volkovo Cemetery, Saint Petersburg: 99

Photo Perret, Lucerne: 94

Prirka Wooden Church, Czech Republic: 67 l

Private Collection, Basel
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 180 r, 217 l a

Private Collection, Bern
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 98, 276

Photo Roulier, Zimmerwald: 181 l, 220, 226, 284

Private Collection, Switzerland
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 65 l b, 77 l, 165 (8), 197 r, 198 l, 212, 229 m

Private Collection: 115 r

Pushkin Fine Art Museum, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 66 l, 274

Regional Museum, Vologda
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 82/83, 270

Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris: 17 l, 42, 253 l

Rijksmuseum, Utrecht: 46

Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 76 r, 85 b, 93 r, 105 l, 111 r a, 114 l, 118 r, 164 (2), 167 l, 170 r b, 172 l, 211, 242 l, 243, 244 l, 257 b, 267 a, 282

Sächsische Landesbibliothek (State Library of Saxony), Department of Photography, Dresden: 90 128 l, 134 r, 144 l, 177 l, 204 260, 262, 265, 272

Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai: 18, 19, 72 l, r, 114 r, 119, 124 r, 135 l a

San Marco, Venice
Photo Scala, Florence: 41
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 21 l, 246 r

San Vitale, Ravenna

Santuario della Madonna del Monte, Cesena: 230 r, 230 l b

Schmidt-Voigt, Jürgen, Königstein: 280, 281

Sophia Cathedral, Kiev
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 76 l, 156 r

Spiritual Academy, Moscow: 137 b, 138 l

State Headquarters of Workshops for Artistic Restoration, Moscow: 235

State Museum of the Ukraine, Kiev: 67 b

State Museums of Prussian Cultural Possessions, Berlin: 10 l, 40 l, 771, 126 r, 127 r, 245 l

The Hermitage, Saint Petersburg: 217 b
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 34, 35, 44, 51 r, 123 l, 255, 271, 285
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 95

Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Photo V. Salomatin, Moscow: 30 78 l, r, 85 a, m, 91, 112 r, 117 l, 122 l, 124 l, 126 l, 134 l a, 143 l, 148 l, 150 l, 151 l, 154, 155, 159 l, 160 l, r, 165 (6) (7) (9), 168 l, 170 l a, 181 r, 268 l,

Photo Perret, Lucerne: 135 l b, 269 a

Victoria and Albert Museum, London: 11 l, 254, l

von Voithenberg, Günther, Munich: 162 r

Wey + Co., Gallery, Lucerne: 228 l a
Photo Perret, Lucerne: 65 l a, l b, 77 l, 165 (8), 196 r, 197 r, 198l, 212 216 a, b, 228 r a, 229 m, 241, 246 l, 249 l, 250, 251, 257 r
Photo Roulier, Zimmerwald: 221, 222, 278, 279

Wichern Publisher, Berlin: 61 r, 229 l, 230 a, 248 r, 249 r

Special thanks to the Central Library of Lucerne and its librarians who were very helpful in source research and generously offered the vast archives of the library for our use.

INDEX

A
Abgar of Edessa 124
Abraham 28, 77
— Bosom of Abraham 185
— Sacrifice of Isaac 185
— Visit of the Three Angels 184
Abraham, Abbot 70
acheiropoietos 79, 124
Adam 139
— and Eve 64, 114
aesthetics 275
Akathist Hymn 7, 128, 176
Alba Julia 60
Alexander Nevsky 80, 89
Alexandria 31, 69
Alexius I Comnenus 46, 172
Alimpy 96
alphabet, Church Slavonic 50–52
altar 224
altar covering 242
Alypios the Stylite 196
amnos 137
anapeson 136
anargyroi 202
Anastasia 51
Anastasis 64, 82, 114, 215
Anastasius I 11
anchorites 194
Ancient, the Ancient of Days 134–136, 145, 150
Andrei Bogolyubsky 77, 95, 166, 177
Andrew, Apostle 75, 189, 190, 244
— Fool for Christ 77, 176, 177
— of Crete 152
Andronicus II 49
Angel 29
— Christ as Angel of Great Counsel 138
— feast day 183
Angelic hierarchies 179
Ankh 26
Anna 60, 148, 149
Anna, Prophetess 105
Annunciation to Mary 53, 150, 190, 242, 256, 257, 273
Antioch, Patriarchate of 31
Antoniev-Sisky Painting Manual 237
Antonius the Hermit 196
— the Roman 99
Antony 76, 196
Apakas, John 64
Aphrodite 64
apocrypha 187
Apostle 29, 187
— number twelve 189
apotheosis 118, 121
Archangelsk 33
architectural backdrops 273
architrave 224
Ariadne, Empress 11
Armenia 68
— Patriarchate of 31
Arsenal of the Kremlin of Moscow 90
Arseny 79
art, as handicraft 277
— beginnings of Christian Art 9
Artemios 58
Ascension of Christ 118
asceticism 194
Assembly of the Land (Zemsky Sobor) 77, 87
Astarte-Cybele 23, 152
Athanasius 35, 196
Athos 32, 62
— Painters' Manual 108, 181, 191, 193, 236
Augustine 29
aureole 118, 145, 229
Auxentius 63
Avvakum 99

B
Bacchus 62
backdrop 273
Balikli 175
Balkan Peninsula 50
Baptism of Jesus 66, 107, 287
Bartholomew 191
Basil I 45
— II Bulgaroktonos 45, 46
Basil the Great 19, 76, 191–193, 228, 288
basma 256, 261
Bawit 17, 70
Beck, Hans Georg 35
Behind-Glass Icons 61, 249
Behind-Glass Painting 248
Beloozero 84
Bethany 109
Bethlehem 104
betrayal by Judas 110
Bible illustration 184
binding agent for paints 241
Birth Cave 22, 23
Blacherniotissa 158, 175
black 239
blessing, gesture of 266
blue 240
body language 266
Bogolyubovo 33, 77
Bogomil stones 46
Bogomils 46, 56, 138
Boris and Gleb 76, 89, 198, 199, 201
Borovsk 33
Bosnia 46
Brahma 27
Brest-Litovsk, Union of 66
Bucharest 31
Bulgaria 52
— Patriarchate of 31
Bulgarians 50
Burning Bush 174, 185, 209, 242
Byzantium 10, 35

C
calendar icons 212
canon of colors 275
canonical 187
Carpathian Ukraine 66
catacombs 10, 14
Catherine 241
Cave Hermits 196
Cave of the Nativity of Christ 23, 104
central image 271
ceramic icons 248
ceramics 248
Cézanne, Paul 283
champlevé 246
Child Jesus on the Paten 137
Child-Old Man 134
Cholui 33, 99, 212
Chonae 181
Christ on linen 125
Christ, see Jesus Christ
Christ-Angel-depictions 138
Christmas Feast, birthday of the "sun of justice" 121
Christmas, date of the Feast 25
Christopher 283
chrysography 99, 234
Church Fathers 76, 101, 191, 192
Cimpulung 61
Clemens 52, 53
clipeus 134, 229
cloisonné enamel 40, 45, 246
coloring 283
Colorism 284
colors 239, 286
compass card 28
consecration of icons 235
Constantine VII Porphyrogennetus 45
Constantine, Emperor 10, 11, 25
Constantine/Cyril 50, 52
Constantinople 12, 31, 35, 37, 176
— Blachernae Church 158
— Chalkoprateia Church 157
— Chora Church 49, 64, 169
— Ecumenical Patriarch 32

— Hagia Eirene 21
— Hagia Sophia 10, 11, 14, 38, 121, 224, 226, 242
— Hodegon Monastery 46, 160, 164
Constantinos IX Monomacho 121
Copts 17, 70, 139
Cosmas and Damian 202
Cosmas Indikopleustes 174
Cosmas of Maium 110, 113, 140, 151
Cosmocrator 122
Crete 32, 64
Croatians 50
cross of blessing 251
cross reliquary 226
cross, as sign of victory 25, 27
— Orthodox form of the cross 27
— symbol 26
crucifixion 25, 26
— of Jesus 112
cruciform reliquary 226
— of Limburg 45, 46, 226
crusaders' icons 72
Curtea de Arges 60
Cyprus 64
— Kykkos Monastery 172
Cyril, Apostle of the Slavs 50, 56
Cyril, Patriarch 35
Cyril of Beloozero 84, 210, 243
Cyrillic alphabet 50
Czestochowa, Black Madonna of 161

D
Damascene, Michael 64
David 45, 50, 184, 185
decade 29
deësis 4, 128, 228, 251, 278
Demetrius 40, 51–53, 58, 198, 199, 201, 245
Demilovich, Ivan 91
Dendrites 194
Descent into Hell, Christ's 114, 284
desert saints 194
Despina Milita 60
Diomedes 237
Dionysius 84, 85, 112
Dionysius the Areopagite 152, 179
diptych 216
Dmitri Donskoi 89
Dmitri of Priluck 271
Doctors of the Church 191
Dominic 66
Donskaya 168
Dormition of the Mother of God 66, 152
Dostoyevsky, Fedor M. 113, 117

E
Easter egg icons 230
Easter image 114
Easter laughter 126, 279
Ecumenical Councils 192
Edessa 124
edge covering of icons 256
Egypt 69
Eleusa 166, 170
Elijah 72, 108, 184, 185, 237, 268
Elisha 185
embroidery art 243
enamel 246, 251
encaustic 11, 16, 38, 121, 238
encaustic painting 121, 238
Entrance (Presentation) of Mary in the Temple 149
Entry of Christ into Jerusalem 103, 110
Epiphanius the Wise 269
Epitaphius 243
etched drawing of glass 249
Ethiopia 70
Eudocia, Empress 40, 164
Eugenius 63
Eustathius 63
Evangelist 187
— Symbols of Evangelists 179, 190
Eye, the Wrathful 130
— the Unsleeping 136

F
face/visage 269
Fallmerayer, Jakob Philipp 35, 50, 62
Fatherhood 135, 144
Fayyum 16
Feast day icons 215, 217
Feast day tier of the Iconostasis 214
Feofan Grek 7, 49, 84, 85, 168, 234, 268
Ferapont Beloozersky 96
Ferapont Monastery 84, 114
Field of Blackbirds 58
Field of Snipe 84
fish, symbol 15
five-finger Cross 266
Flagellation of Christ 112
Florus 203
Fools for Christ 196, 197
Foot Washing at the Last Supper 110, 111
founders of monasteries 284
Fountain Madonna 175
Fountain, Mary as Life-giving Fountain 277
Francis of Assisi 66, 139, 230
Friday 80, 207
Friesz, Othon 286

G
Gabriel, Archangel 150, 179, 180, 228, 283
Galaktotrophusa 173
Galicia 66
Galla Placidia 11
gammadium 27
Genghis Khan 84
genii 179
George 19, 58, 68, 69, 80, 199, 203, 264
Georgia 68
— Patriarchate of 31
gesso 233, 234, 244
gesture 266
Gethsemane 110, 111
gilding of icons 234
Glagolitic alphabet 50, 56
glass 248
glass icons 61, 249
Glavnica 52
Gleb, see Boris and Gleb
glue layer of the icon 233
Glykophilusa 169
God the Father, the Ancient of Days 135, 144
Gogol, Nikolai 277
gold 241, 273, 283
gold glass 11, 248
Golden Horde 78
Good Friday 113
Good Shepherd 10, 12, 13, 15, 252
Gracanica 32
Great Blessing of Water on January 6 107
Great Mother 22
green 240
greeting, gesture of 268
Gregory of Nazianzus 76, 191–193
Gregory of Nyssa 192, 193
Gregory Palamas 49
Gregory Thaumaturgus 76
Grigory 161
grotesque 281
Grünewald, Isenheim Altarpiece 267
Gruzinskaya 172, 173
guardian angels 183

H
Hagiosoritissa 157
Hans Holbein the Younger 60
Harbaville, Triptych 43
Hauser, Arnold 31
Hell, Descent of Christ to 114
Hellenism 12, 121
— painting 11
Heracleius, Emperor 37, 50

Heraklion 64
hermeneutics 22
Hermits 194
Hesychasm 49, 261
hetoimasia 86
hexagram 28
Hierotheos 85, 152
High Priest, Christ as 128
Hilandar 56, 62, 63, 112, 163
Hodegetria 160, 164, 172; see also Mother of God Hodegetria
Hoezel, Adolf 288
Holy Spirit, the Outpouring of the 189
— symbolized as dove 144
Holy Thursday 110
Horus, as a boy 23
Hospitality of Abraham 28, 77, 87, 90, 142, 143
humor in icon painting 126, 279
Hundred-Chapter Synod 88, 237
Hypapante (Encounter in the Temple) 105

I
icon, copy of a primordial image 17
— and the western meditative image 33, 72
— art of the sublime 277
— artistic image 275
— in metallic repoussé 244
— material 233
— products of cultural formation 31
— relationship to a text 19
— unity of image and word 103
— window to eternity 283
icon coverings 256
icon covers 256
icon painters 31
icon painting, centers and schools 32
Iconoclastic Controversy 19, 20, 275
iconoclasts 19
iconostasis 81, 217, 218, 223, 224
icons of the Crusaders 46, 72
icons, friends of 19
Ierusalimskaya 172
Ignatius 65
Image of the Mother of God 155
Imitation 269
Immanuel 134, 144, 150, 158
incarnate 239
intercessory gesture 266
Ioann of Ustyug 197
Irene, Empress 19, 21
irony 279
Isaiah 184
Ishtar-Astarte 23, 152
Isis-Osiris Myth 23, 24
Istanbul 35
itineraries 216
Ivan III 84, 87
— IV Grozni (the Terrible) 80, 88, 89
Ivan Alexander 56
Iverskaya 162
ivory 45, 245
ivory sculpture 43

J
Jacob de Voragine 116, 152
James the Great 191
James the Less 191
Jerome 23
Jerusalem 31
Jesus Christ
— Angel of Great Counsel 138
— Ascension 118
— Baptism 66, 107
— Church of the Holy Sepulcher 118
— Crucifixion 67
— Descent into Hell 64
— Entry into Jerusalem 13, 103, 110
— Foot Washing at the Last Supper 110
— Giver of Life 127
— High Priest 128, 13
— Immanuel 134
— in the Tomb 113
— incarnate Word of God 103
— King of Kings 128
— Last Supper 110
— Lord of the Church 128
— Made Without Hands 35, 37, 45, 79, 124, 126, 251
— Nativity of 66, 87, 104
— Pantocrator 121-123, 129
— Passion 103, 112
— Presentation in the Temple 105
— Raising of Lazarus 109
— Resurrection 114
— Savior 122
— Savior of Souls 129
— Sun of Justice 24, 25
— the Ancient of Days 135
— the Benefactor 127
— the Holy Silence 133, 138
— the Lamb of God 137
— the Man of Sorrows 68
— the Merciful 127
— the One sunk down into the sleep of death 136
— the resurrected Lord and Mary Magdalene 116
— the resurrected Lord and Thomas 62, 117
— the Twelve-Year-Old in the Temple 106
— the Unsleeping Eye 136
— the Vine 61
— the Wrathful Eye 130
Jesus Prayer 138
Joachim 60, 148, 149
John, Apostle/Evangelist/Theologian 75, 189, 257, 261
John Chrysostom 76, 191–193, 228
John Climacus 263, 264, 286
John of Damascus 21, 63, 114, 147, 152, 161, 163
John Scylla 21
John the Forerunner/the Baptist 13, 66, 72, 78, 228, 239, 246, 267
— Beheading of 93, 281
John Zographus 127
Jonah 13
Joseph, at the birth of Jesus 104
Joseph of Arimathea 113
Jovan 56, 167
Joy of All Who Sorrow 176
Judas 110–112
Jude 191
Justinian I 10, 11, 13, 37, 38

K
kairos 271
Kandinsky, Vassily 283, 284
Kargopol 81
Karlový Vary 31
Kazan 89
Keramidion 125
Kiev 33, 75, 76
— Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom 76, 156, 157
— Cave Monastery 76, 196
Kirchhoff, Kilian 147
Kizhi 33, 81
Klotzas, George 64
Kosovo Pole 58
Krakow 67
Kulikovo Pole 84, 89, 168
Kykkotissa 172

L
Lamb of God 137
lamentation, gesture of 266
Lampardos, Immanuel 65
Last Judgment 86
laughter 278
Laurence 76
Laurus 203
Lazarus 15, 109

Lazarus Saturday 109
Legenda Aurea 116, 152
Lemberg 33
Leo III, Emperor 19, 20
Leskov, Nikolai 99
levkas 233
light 281
line 286
linear perspective 273
Liturgical hangings 242
liturgy 218
— Breaking of the Eucharistic Bread 137
love of humanity, the ideal of 10, 12
Lublin 67
Luke 62, 187, 233, 234

M
Macedonia 52
Madonna 66
Madonna painters 66
Madonnieri 66
Makarije 56, 59, 167
Makary 88, 89
Man of Sorrows 113
mandylion 79, 124–126, 229
maphorion 155
marble inlay 40, 247
Mardarios 63
— Mary, see Mother of God
marginal depictions 179, 271
Marian devotion 64, 155
Mark 191, 228
Martyrs of Sebaste 199, 245, 263
Mary lactans 173
Mary, life of 147
Mary Magdalene 116
Matthew, Gervase 38
Matthew 62, 191
Matthias 191
Maximov, Ivan 91, 273
medallion 229
Mehmet II 35, 49
Melismos 137
Menas, monastic abbot 17, 70
Metallic icons 68, 246, 251
Metamorphosis (Transfiguration) 108
Methodius, Apostle of the Slavs 51, 52, 56
Michael VIII Palaeologus 49
Michael, Archangel 40, 85, 179–181, 228
Mid-Pentecost 106
Mikhail, Prince 79
Mikhailovich, Alexei 91
military saints 56, 58, 198
Milutin 58
Milutin School 58
miraculous icons 17
Mithras 24, 25
Mitrofanovic, Georgy 58
Modest 203
modulus 263, 264
Moldavia-Bessarabia 61
monastic workshops 96
Monophysites 37
monthly icons 212
mosaic 254
mosaic icons 45, 63, 127, 254
Moscow 33, 166
— Andronikov Monastery 84, 86
— Arsenal 90
— center of icon painting 86
— Patriarchate 32
— Third Rome 32, 84
Moses 72, 108, 184, 185, 268
mother goddesses 22
Mother of God 93, 228
— Achtyrskaya 4, 267
— Annunciation 150
— Arakiotina 65
— Bogolyubskaya 95
— Bride with bridal veil 128
— Burning Bush 72, 174, 185, 209, 242
— Chalkoprateia 157
— Comfort of the Woeful 160, 176
— Diakonissa 156
— Donskaya 168
— Dormition of 85, 152
— Eleusa 35, 169, 170
— Entry into the Temple 149
— Galaktotrophusa 23, 173
— Glykophilusa 168, 169, 171
— Gruzinskaya 173
— Hagiosoritissa 157
— Hodegetria 46, 63, 66, 84, 160, 162-165, 172, 288
— Iconography 209
— Ierusalimskaya 172
— Joy of All Who Suffer 176
— Kykkotissa 172
— Lady of the Angels 65
— Life-giving Fountain 277
— Life-giving Well 175
— Nativity of 147, 148
— of Beloozero 167
— of Hilandar 56
— of Kazan 251
— of Korsun 171
— of Pelagonia 56
— of Studenica 56
— of Tenderness 166
— of the Monastic Cave 76
— of the Sign 133, 158, 159
— of the Thousand Ships 156
— of Tikhvin 96
— of Tolga 78
— of Vladimir 5, 87, 90, 101, 171
— of Yaroslavl 171
— Orans 156, 159, 253
— Panhagia 159, 253
— Paraclesis 157
— Pelagonitissa 59, 167
— Petrovskaya 171, 261
— Platytera 158
— Pokrov (Protecting Veil) 77, 177
— Psychosostria 161, 162
— Rescuer of Souls 52
— Spiritual Palace 150
— Svenskaya 76
— Synaxis of 151
— the Prophets Foretold Thee 184
— Tricheirusa 63, 162
— Umilenie 171
— Unshakable Wall 156
— Vladimirskaya 166
— with three hands 58
mother symbols 22
Mount of Olives 118
mourning, gesture of 266
Mstera 33, 99, 212
mummy portraits 11, 16
myths 22

N
narrative perspective 263
national saints 198
Nativity (birth) of Mary 148, 257
Nativity of Christ 66, 87, 104, 217
Nerezi 32
Nestorius 201
Nicephorus, Patriarch 20
Nicephorus III Botaneiates 254
Nicholas 65, 72, 81, 99, 204, 205, 251
Nicodemus 113
Nikon 99
nimbus 138
Noli me tangere 116
nose length as modulus 264
Novgorod 33, 75, 80, 126
— Sophia Cathedral 80, 244, 267
number symbolism 27
Nut, Egyptian Goddess of Death 13

O
ochre 239
Ochrid 31, 32, 52, 58, 157
octagon 28

oklad 68, 256
Old Believers, Old Ritualists 99, 179, 237, 266
olifa 234
Onuphrius 95, 197
Orans 9, 12–14, 156, 254
Orestius 63
Orpheus 14, 45
Outline drawing of icons 234, 286

P
Painters' Manual of Mount Athos 108, 181, 191, 193, 236
painters' manuals 103, 236
painters' workshops 45, 64, 76, 90
Pala d'Oro, Venice 21, 246
Palekh 33, 99, 176, 212, 237
Palm Sunday 110
Panhagia 159
Panteleimon 202
Pantocrator 121–123, 127, 129, 130
Paraclesis 157
Paraskeva-Pyatnika 5, 80, 207
Partriarchates 31
Passion of Jesus 103
Paterikon of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev 96
pattern of movement 264
pattern of proportion 264
Paul 4, 73, 189, 190, 228, 277
Pavlovech, Nikita 91
Pec 31
Pelagonia 56
Pelagonitissa 59, 167
pentagram 28
Pentecost 29, 187
Peribleptos 172
perspective 262, 273
— inverted 77, 96, 263, 273
— narrative 263
— of importance 263
perspective of importance 263
Peter I the Great 32, 90
Peter, Apostle 7, 19, 189, 190, 228
Peter, Metropolitan 86, 91
Peter of Athos 95
Petrov, Alexander 204
Petrovskaya 171, 172
Petrozavodsk 81
Phanurius 197
pharmacists, sainted 202
philanthropia 10, 12
Philip 191
philosopher 12, 13
Philoxenia 142
Photius 45, 156
physicians, sainted 202
physiognomy 269
Physiologos 136
pictorial light 281
pictorial strips 271
pietas 12
pilgrim 197
Pillar Saints 194
Pimenovskaya 155, 172
Platytera 158, 229
Plique-a-jour (enamel) 246
Plotin 277
Podkubenskaya 166
Podlinnik 236, 237
Poganova 56
pointing gesture 266
Pokrov 77, 176
polychromy 283
portrait 11, 121
Presentation of Jesus in the Temple 105, 287
Preslav 31
Prilep 56
processional icons 127, 129, 229
Prochorus 75, 189
prohibition of images 9
Prokopy 197
prophets 184
proportion 263
Protecting Veil 176
protective layer on icons 234
Proto-gospel of James 147
Pskov 33, 80, 81
Psychosoter 129
Psychosoteria, Psychosostria 52, 161, 162
purple 240
Pustosersk 99
putti 179

R
Rabula-manuscript 121
Raising of Lazarus 109
Raphael, Archangel 183
Ravenna, Cappella Arcivescovile 25
— Galla Placidia 25
— San Vitale 14, 37
red 240
relief icons 247
Renaissance, Macedonian 45
— Palaeologan 49
— Razian 56
rendering, complicated 271
Rescuer of Souls 129
Resurrection of the dead 10
— of Jesus 10, 64, 114
— of Jesus, women at the tomb 114
rhipidiae, liturgical fans 137
Riza 256
Roma Nova 10
Romania 60
— Patriarchate of 31
Romanov, dynasty of Tsars 90
Romans 35
Romanus I Lacapenus 46
— III Argyrus 121
Romanus Group 45
Romanus the Melodist 7, 77
Rome 31
— Callistus Catacomb 15
— Coemeterium Maius 15
— Comodilla Catacomb 15
— Domitilla Catacomb 15
— Saint Peter's Basilica 25
— Priscilla Catacomb 173
— Vatican Necropolis 24
rood screen 224
root of Jesse 82
round painting 229
rows (tiers) of the iconostasis 224
Royal Doors of the iconostasis 190, 193, 224
Rublev, Andrei 4, 31, 78, 84–86, 105, 110, 143, 288
Rurik 80
Russia, Patriarchate 31

S
sacred springs 175
Saint Catherine's, Monastery of, Sinai 14, 19
Saint Petersburg 95
sanctuary (altar), separation of 218
Sanctus, hymn 139
Sanok 67
Sarah 77
sarcophagus 10, 12
Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus 13, 247, 252
Sava 56, 58, 163
Savati 79, 96
Savin, Nikifor 93, 135
Savior with Wet Beard 126
— with the Wrathful Eye 130
scenic painting 273
Schöne, Wolfgang 281
sculpture 252
sculptured icons 253
Sebaste, Martyrs of 199, 245, 263
Septimius Severus 11
sepulchral art 10
Seraph 145, 179

— Christ as crucified Seraph 138, 139
Serapis and Isis 240
Serbia 56, 58
— Patriarchate of 31
Serbians 50
Sergei of Radonezh 84, 269
Sergiev Posad 33
Sergius 62, 73
Serpentin 254
Shemokmedi, monastery 113
Shepherd with Lamb 9
Sign Language 268
sign of the zodiac 29
silencing gesture 266
silent asceticism 196
Simeon, monk 56
— Prophet 105
Simon Zelotes 191
Sinoyev 91
Šiševo 59
Skopje 32
Sleep of Death of Christ 136
Smolenskaya 162
Sofia 31
Solomon 184
Solovetsy-Monastery 95, 96
Solvychegodsk 81, 93
Sophia Cathedrals 140
Sophronius of Jerusalem 107
Sopoćani 32
Spiridon 202, 203
Spiridonov, Simeon 233
Spring, Life-giving, icon of 175
square 28
stage 273
standard (military) icons 229
star, symbol of virginity of Mary 152, 160
steatite 245
Stephan Dušan 58
Stephan Nemanja 56, 58, 163, 198
Stoglav 88
stone relief 50
Stroganov, merchant dynasty 93
Stroganov Painters' Manual 191, 237
Stroganov School 93, 99
Studenica 32
sun as symbol 24
— Birthday of the Invincible Sun 25
— of Justice 121
sun chariot 24
sun cult 121
Sunday of Orthodoxy 19
Supper, Last Supper of Jesus 110
surface of icons 233
Svyatopolk 198, 201
swastika 26, 27
Sylvester 89
symbol 22, 133
Symeon the New Theologian 261
— Metaphrastes 192
— the Stylite 194
Synaxis 151
— of the Angels 183
— of the Apostles 187, 239
Synaxis of the Mother of God (Assembly) 151

T
tabletki 244, 267
Tabor 108, 268
tailored icons 230
tempera painting 38, 239
textile icons 137, 243
textiles 242
theater 273
Thebaid 196
Thecla 107
Theodora, Empress 21
Theodore 19, 93, 248, 254
Theodore Metochites 49
— Studites 20, 21
Theodosius 76, 196
Theodosius I 13, 16
Theophanes Graptus 156, 168
Theophanes the Greek 49, 84
Theophany, Feast on January 6 107
Theotokion 147
Thessalonika 32, 50
Thomas 117, 191
three heads 145
three, in the history of religions 27
three-finger Cross 266
Three-handed Mother of God 163
Three-headed God 26
Throne of Grace 138, 145
Tikhvin 96
Time of Troubles 90
Timothy 152
Tomb, women at the Tomb of Jesus 115
torture scenes in icon painting 281
— Transfiguration 49, 108
Transfiguration of Christ 49, 108, 268, 286
Transylvania 60, 61
travel icons 216
triangle 28
Tricheirusa 63, 163
Trinity, Holy
— Icon of Rublev 84, 143, 144
Trinity, Holy 27–29, 77, 84, 90, 142
— as "Fatherhood" 135
— Feast of the Trinity 142
— in angelic form (Old Testament) 142
— in human form (New Testament) 144, 145
triptych 216
Trnovo 31, 53
Tropaion 27
Tver 77, 78
Twelve High Feasts 214
twelve, the number 29

U
Ukraine 66
Umilenie 166
Uniates 76
unity of Image and Word 103
Uriel 183
Ushakov, Simon 90, 91, 134, 172
Ustyug 33
Uvarov Painters' Manual 237
Uzhorod 66

V
Vasily 196
Vassilev, Pascal 56
Veliki Ustyug 81
veneration of images 19
Venice 32
— San Marco, Pala d'Oro 21, 246
Venus of Willendorf 22
Venus-Adonis-myth 24
Veronica, veil of 124
Via Egnatia 13, 32, 72
vine, symbol 61
Virginity of Mary, Old Testament Allusions 174
Vita icons 75, 84, 96, 99, 204, 210, 271
Vladimir I of Kiev 46, 756, 89, 198, 201
— II Monomakh 89
Vladimir on the Klyasma 77, 166
Vladimirov, Yosif 91
Vladimirskaya 101, 166
Vladimir-Suzdal 33, 77, 78, 86
Vlasy 203, 264
Vologda 33, 81, 82
Volokolamsk 33
votive icons 230

W
Wallachia 60, 61
wanderers for the sake of Christ 197
weekly icons 212
white 239
White Sea 84

Wisdom of God 139, 140
wood for icons 233
wood-cut icon 253
wood-cut image 95
workshops of the Tsars 90, 99
world egg 24

X
Xenia of Tver 87

Y
Yaroslav the Wise 78
Yaroslavich, Mikhail 79, 87
Yaroslavl 77
yearly icons 212
yellow 240
Yezid II, Caliph 20
Yuryev Polsky 33

Z
Zemsky Sobor 77, 87
zodiac 24, 29
Zoë, Empress 121
Zoodochos pege 175
Zosima 95, 96
Zvenigorod 85

And so the brilliantly formulated text of this extremely knowledgeable author is anything but the usual dry and dusty study of a specialist. This presentation has grown out of the whole experience of an academic life. It is inspired by the tense, often dramatic history of the world of icons, a fascinating and enigmatic world. Concise information is combined with lively stories. The details gain color and profile from unexpected places. The aesthetic focus on icons, which are also works of art, is transfigured through the depth of faith expressed in these "divine images."

The Authors

Konrad Onasch, Ph.D., was Professor at Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg, Germany, from 1950 until being named Emeritus in 1981, and Head of Orthodox Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Christian Archeology and Ecclesiastical Art. In addition to his works on Dostoyevsky, he is known internationally for his work and numerous publications on icon painting.

Annemarie Schnieper-Müller, Ph.D., is an art historian, publisher's assistant, freelance journalist and editor.

ISBN 1-878351-53-2